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Screen

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Kari Hanet: Shock Corridor
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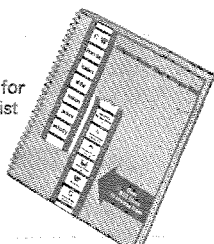
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Christian Metz has distinguished five channels of communication in the film, supported by five purports (matters) of expression: 'moving photographic image, recorded phonetic sound, recorded noises, recorded musical sound, writing' (cit in *Screen* v 14 n 1/2 p 218). Sophisticated theories and techniques have been developed for the analysis of the second, fourth and fifth of these purports, but the first and third remain highly problematic, despite recent advances in semiotics. In *Screen* v 15 n 3 we published an article by Boris Eikhenbaum on the 'Problems of Film Stylistics' which raised the question of what he called the 'divination' of the meaning of these purports of the film and suggested a solution in the notion of 'inner speech'. In this issue of *Screen* we present a number of articles explicating and developing aspects of this notion. (Eikhenbaum, writing in 1927 about the silent film, obviously concentrates on the first of Metz's purports of expression, on the image band, as do the authors of the articles in this issue, but many of his and their arguments are applicable to the noise band.)

Ronald Levaco shows how Eikhenbaum's use of the notion of inner speech develops from the work of the formalist poetics, among whom he was a leading figure, but also that a related notion was developed concurrently by the Soviet psychologist Lev Vygotsky and his pupils. Vygotsky's distinction between inner speech and communicative speech, and his discussion of the relations between inner speech and the syncretic use of language apparently shared by children and the members of primitive societies, were taken up by Eisenstein in his speech 'Film Form: New Problems' of 1935, and underly much of his later theoretical writing. Eikhenbaum's essay and Levaco's commentary thus provide a valuable background to David Bordwell's reading of Eisenstein's theoretical texts which is also published in this issue (see also Ben Brewster's introductory note).

Paul Willemsen in his article argues that if the process of film 'divination' is anchored entirely in inner speech, and if inner speech is itself dependent on verbal language, this constitutes a radical challenge to the old ideal of cinema as a universal and international art, crossing all frontiers because it is untouched by the language barriers dividing its viewers. Anchorage in verbal language is undoubtedly an important resource in the interpretation of visual messages (see Barthes's 'Rhetoric of the Image' in *Working Papers in Cultural Studies* no 1, Spring 1971), and the verbal language of emitter and receiver is undoubtedly an important factor in inner speech. But Eikhenbaum's essay does not necessarily imply a conception restricted to this aspect, which would tend towards a very narrowly linguistic concept of all signifying systems.

Although inner speech is indeed structured, it is by no means certain that it is structured *like* a language, let alone ultimately governed by the laws of verbal language. Willemen's discussion of metaphor does point out that the film-maker's own language moulds the structure of the specific film, thus orchestrating its economy of production-reading and its area of textuality; but this does not render the filmic text unreadable for a viewer whose language is not that of the film-maker. However, this does raise the question as to whether there is a threshold for reading a film – in other words, whether there is a point at which signification begins.

It should be pointed out that both the essays commenting upon Eikhenbaum's text have concentrated on his ideas of inner speech and filmic metaphor to the exclusion of any discussion of his notion of *photogeny*. Yet Eikhenbaum's *photogeny* as the 'unconscious, "trans-sense" essence of film', a concept strikingly similar to Eisenstein's in his description of artistic practice as the dialectic between 'sensual thinking' and logical thinking, is extremely interesting also. Not only do these descriptions relate to Barthes's notion of the 'third meaning' and hence implicitly to the problem of emotion or affect in film, but they also link this to inner speech, thus suggesting a possible direction for future research into the understanding of the language of film, and into artistic practice in general. It is problematic how far the 'divination' of the moving image can be located within verbal language and the symbolic field, and how far it must also be located within the imaginary field, which is still under very tentative analysis. The problems of the 'third meaning', of affect and of the semiotic nature of the image are briefly discussed in Kari Hanet's analysis of *Shock Corridor* in this issue of *Screen*.

Also included in this issue is a translation of Raymond Bellour's analysis of codification in Howard Hawks's *The Big Sleep*. Bellour was invited by *Screen* and the Educational Advisory Service of the BFI to present this study in a talk at the National Film Theatre in December, following a screening of the film. The organisation by *Screen* of discussions to accompany the screening of films and seasons at the NFT was initiated earlier this year with two seminars on topics raised by the Rossellini season that *Screen* selected for the NFT, and we hope to be able to pursue this type of intervention in the future.

Finally, along with the first series of articles in the Film Culture section which are introduced by Alan Lovell at the beginning of the section, we present the text of an interview with George Hoellering, one of the producers of *Kuhle Wampe*; lack of space in the Brecht number (*Screen* v 15 n 2) has forced us to hold it over until this issue.

BEN BREWSTER
KARI HANET

Oxford books on film

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Christian Metz

Translated by Michael Taylor

Essais sur la Signification au Cinema was first published in 1968. In them Christian Metz makes a pioneering attempt to apply the insights of structural linguistics to a medium which has a definite language of its own. The essays include discussion of the nature of film language, 'reality' in film, the role of montage, and the concept of 'modernity'. £6-25

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Alfred Appel

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Raymond Bellour

Take as the example twelve shots from *The Big Sleep*. They are inscribed between two major 'scenes'. The first, in Eddy Mars' garage – where Vivian enters the action on Marlowe's side for the first time – culminates in the death of Canino; the second, in Geiger's house, is the end of the film – Eddy Mars' death brings the open series of enigma and peripeteia to a close and sets the seal on the emergence of a couple. In between the two there are twelve shots showing Vivian and Marlowe in the car on the way from the garage to the house.

As a specific unit of code, they correspond exactly to what Christian Metz in his '*grande syntagmatique*' calls a *scene*; that is, an autonomous segment, characterised by a chronological coincidence between 'the unique consecutiveness of the signifier (deployment on the screen) and the unique consecutiveness of the signified (= the time of the fiction)'.¹ On the other hand, as a specifically textual unit, they also constitute what, in work towards a description of the classic narrative film, I have chosen to call a segment;² that is, a moment in the filmic chain which is delimited both by an elusive but powerful sense of dramatic or fictional unity, and by the more rigorous notion of identity of setting and characters of the narrative. (When, as is most often the case, the two pertinences do not overlap completely, ie when a significant variation in location or character appears within one and the same segment, the segment divides into sub-segments.) In this case the dramatic unity is obvious – a pause between two strong times marked by the deaths of Canino and Eddy Mars respectively, and a resumption of verbal relations between Vivian and Marlowe. Identity of characters and location is absolute – throughout the segment we have a car, and the two main characters in intimate conversation. Finally, the segmental nature of the shots is reinforced by an element which, for all that it is not inherent in its definition, is often consubstantial with it in the classic narrative; the twelve shots open and close on lap dissolves – a punctuation which here functions as a (redundant) sign of demarcation.³

The interest of this segment lies in its relative poverty. Even an attentive viewer will not be sure to retain anything but the impression of a certain amount of vague unity. Questioned, he will very likely hazard the view that the segment consists of a long take supported by dialogue, or at best, of two or three shots. But Hawks needed twelve shots to secure the economy of this segment. Undoubtedly, that economy was designed in order not to be perceived, which is in fact one of the determining features of the American cinema. But it exists, and from it the classic mode of narration draws a part of its power. It is true, as Metz has

8 observed, that ' (that mode) is geared towards the sequence and it is the sequence (and not the shot) which is its preoccupation, its constant problem '.⁴ But the organic material of this preoccupation is the prior set of formal, hierarchically-ordered relations between the shots. What I want to show here is how the simplest narrative fact imaginable – two characters talking in a car – can come to set into play a series of elementary but subtle operations which ensure its integration into the development of a narration. It is on this level that the – relative – poverty of this segment is exemplary.

According to Rivette's famous formula, 'obviousness is the mark of Howard Hawks' genius '.⁵ No doubt—provided we recognise the extent to which that obviousness only comes to the fore insofar as it is coded.

The text of the segment is constituted by the concerted action of six codes, listed from (a) to (f) in the accompanying recapitulatory diagram. The first three concern variations in scale between the shots, whether they are static or moving, and camera angle (symbolised by the arrow). These are three specific codes which manifest the potentialities of one of the five purports of expression proper to all sound film, ie the image-band.⁶ The three others are non-specific codes; the presence or absence of this or that character or characters from the units considered (and note the lack of extension of this code here – there is no shot without a character), whether they express themselves in dialogue or not, and finally whether these units are of greater or lesser duration, does not depend on cinema. In the case of the last code, a relative imprecision will be noted – the times of each shot are brought into clear opposition, and this is just one of the multiple abstractions to which the codes subject the text. As for those elements consigned to the seventh column, they do of course come within a code, but its extension differs radically from that of the remaining six. It differs in two senses: as a code of narrative actions it is of itself broader than the rest, pluri-codic from the outset through the different levels on which its elements are located; in addition, it only takes on its specific value as code in the light of the body of the text (for example the film) for which it determines one of the principal semantic axes. It is a reflection of this extension that it figures here in only a restricted number of elements capable of entering into combination with the action of the other six codes in the circumscribed space of twelve shots.

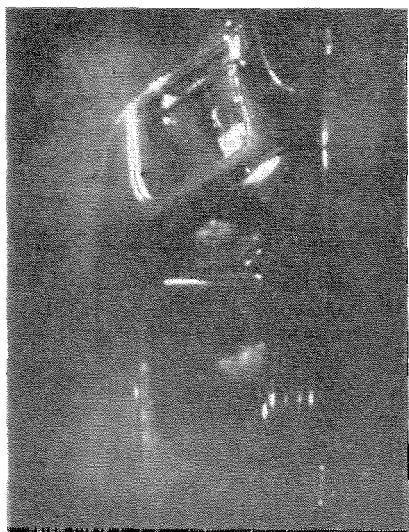
The most direct oppositions of the segment emerge between shots 1 and 2. Shot 1 is the only moving shot; it tracks in to frame the front right window of the car, and (from medium shot to medium-close shot) delimits two frames which are to have no equivalent in the remainder of the segment. I should stress (something which does not seem to have constituted a distinct code



2



1



The Big Sleep



6



5





10



9



	Framing	S/M	Angle	Characters	Speech	Time	Elements of Narration
1	MS → MCS	M	↗	VM	-	+	
2	CS	S	↗	VM	+VM	+	
3	CU	S	↗	M	+M	-	
4	CU	S	↖	V	+VM	-	
5	CU	S	↗	M	+M	-	
6	CU	S	↖	V	+MV	-	V: 'I guess I am in love with you' Marlowe's movement as he takes a corner
7	CS	S	↗	VM	+VM	+	
8	CU	S	↖	V	+M	-	
9	CU	S	↗	M	+M	-	
10	CS	S	↗	VM	+VM	+	M: 'I guess I am in love with you'
11	CU	S	↖	V	-	-	
12	CS	S	↗	VM	-	+	Vivian puts her hand on Marlowe's arm
	a	b	c	d	e	f	

but might have done so) that it is the only shot taken outside the car. A fourth – correlative – opposition is marked in the transition between presence and absence of dialogue. But from shot 1 to 2 the narration is at pains to soften any excessive difference, ensuring continuity on three levels: through the relative identity of duration of the shots, the combined presence of the two main characters in both shots, and above all, by maintaining the initial camera angle (from left to right) which is the simplest way of ensuring a sense that one is watching one and the same shot (see plates).

Shot 3 starts from an unevenly graduated transition (it is static like shot 2, and preserves the same camera angle as shots 1 and 2) to introduce another series of differences. The two characters/one character (Marlowe) change has its three correlates: passage from medium-close shot to close-up, from long take to short take, and the centring of the dialogue on one character.

Shot 4 refines this beginning of a system. We pass naturally from one character to the other, from Marlowe to Vivian, as if shot 2 had been divided to show us in turn the hero and the heroine, giving each of them the same reduction in framing and duration. But only at the cost of a double difference: Vivian does not speak alone in shot 4 as Marlowe did in shot 3. Instead they both talk. And above all, the angle changes completely to show Vivian full face, enclosed by the space of the car interior – the reverse of Marlowe, beside whose face the night landscape continues to flow, discernible through the left front window of the car.

Thereafter the segment organises itself on this twofold opposition alternating between two characters and one character, and between each of the two characters. But while the static nature of the shot, the distribution of the scale of framing and the camera angle remain invariable, the other pertinences undergo notable changes.

(a) Firstly, the distribution of the characters. The shots which show the characters alone follow a very precisely graded pattern which complicates the initial 2/1-1 alternation. This pattern may be broken down as follows: four alternating shots (3-6), then two (8-9), then one (11). Inevitably, within the gradual contraction that marks the curve of the segment and ensures its internal acceleration (what might be called its 'suspense'), a privileged status is assigned to Vivian who figures in shot 11. Note that this privilege is secured by a delicate transition which inverts the initial data of the alternation – the M/V/M/V order which succeeds shot 2, becomes V/M after shot 7, as if to pave the way for the absence of Marlowe in the last occurrence.

(b) But the privilege conceded within one code (presence in the image) is overthrown in another (presence in the dialogue belonging to each shot). We have already noted that while Marlowe alone speaks in shot 3 where he is alone in the image, Marlowe

14 and Vivian both talk in shot 4 which shows Vivian alone, an opposition which is continued in shots 5 and 6. The shots which follow accentuate this imbalance in accordance with a progression which is at the same time inverse, similar and different to that of the image-presence progression. For Marlowe alone speaks in shots 8 and 9 which show the two characters alternately, and while he does not speak in shot 11 where Vivian marks her privilege in the image, she – far from speaking – is quite silent.⁷

This silence, which opposes this shot of Vivian to the whole anterior series of shots showing one character, is followed by another silence. Shot 12, which shows both Vivian and Marlowe again, is silent thereby giving the other end of the segment a symmetry with shot 1 whose singularity in relation to those that follow has been noted. A folding effect which clearly demonstrates the way in which the narration, even down to its details, proceeds through a differential integration of its constituent elements.

(c) Thirdly, time. While the two characters-long take/one character-short take equivalence is respected throughout the segment, the first term of the opposition undergoes profound internal variation. Shot 7 is in fact much longer than its corresponding shots 1, 2, 10 and 12, to the point where it is almost as long as the whole set of remaining eleven shots. The strategic placement of this shot will be noted – it occurs in the middle of the segment, thus delimiting a beginning which makes it possible, and an end which it motivates and which echoes the beginning through a multiple process, a process simultaneously of equivalence through symmetry, of resolution through repetition and variation, and of acceleration in balancing.

The arrangement shown by the work of the codes is the same one that shapes the meaning of the fiction. From the mass of narrative elements ebbing and flowing throughout the segment (conversations, turning on a deepening of the relations of the enigma, and the more or less continuous-discontinuous field of the characters' actions and reactions) I have isolated only two phrases and two gestures. ' . . . I guess I am in love with you '. This phrase, which occurs twice, uttered first by Vivian and then by Marlowe, clearly shows the extent to which the reduplication effect – in this instance a simple mirror effect linked to the admission of love – is constitutive of the narrative. But this is so at the cost of an inversion which underscores the fact that repetition is constitutive only inasmuch as it takes its starting point from the difference circumscribing it, within a movement of bi-motivation which is in fact the specific necessity of this type of narrative. It is in shot 6 in which she appears alone that Vivian makes the first admission of love whose effect carries over onto shot 7, thereby justifying among other things its exceptional length. Inversely, it is in shot 10 in which Vivian and Marlowe appear together that he reiterates the admission whose effect focuses on shot 11 which shows Vivian

alone and silent.

The two gestures on the contrary are relatively heterogeneous. But they are of interest, the first – Marlowe gripping the steering wheel on a difficult swerve – by specifying him, as he has been throughout the film, as belonging on the side of action; the second, Vivian's tender gesture, coming as an explicit and conclusive response to the admission of love, in that it lets us place her clearly within a feeling only recognised and expressed by her once she has committed herself in the action on Marlowe's side.

This double narrative inflection moreover has its effect on at least two of the codic implications of the narrative whose articulation appears that much more strongly motivated as a result. On the one hand the divergence between presence in the dialogue and presence in the image which privilege Marlowe and Vivian respectively; on the other, the difference in camera angle, concentrated on Vivian and abstracting her face on the surface of the screen. Easily recognisable here is a double sign of the mythologisation of the woman. Hawks, we might note, is one of the Hollywood directors who has most profoundly re-orientated the Hollywood tradition of the woman-object. The well-known independence and initiative of his heroines brings to certain of his couples – and to none more than that of *The Big Sleep* – the slightly legendary character of a relationship of adult reciprocity. But this is only achieved through the codified marks which, in this instance, make it the woman whose magnified face simultaneously and wholly expresses and receives the admission of love.

Nevertheless it would be over simple to move to a neat conclusion and find something like the 'secret' of the text in this correspondence, to see it as the rationale of the text, discovered in its meaning, or even in a meaning. On the other hand, if there is nothing but meaning, and if it has a meaning, in the sense that one might say it has a direction, this must, I think, be expressed in quite a different way. In these films, let's say in the classic American cinema, meaning is constituted by a correspondence in the balances achieved – as a law of the text in development – throughout its numerous codic and pluri-codic levels, in other words, its systems. Multiple in both nature and extension, these cannot be reduced to any truly unitary structure or semantic relationship.

But, to confine ourselves to what has been produced by this analytical description of twelve shots isolated from a film which can justifiably figure as one of the models of American high classicism, we note:

(a) the number of shots, which is relatively high given the exigencies of the action. This allows for a discontinuity capable of ensuring a certain degree of variation of the filmic space within the given time.

16 (b) This variation, which the narrative adopts as one of its basic options is, on the other hand, limited by a profound tendency towards repetition. Repetition essentially takes the upperhand through a number of strictly similar shots: on the one hand shots 3, 5 and 9 of Marlowe, and on the other, shots 4 and 6 of Vivian. (The similarity in question is of course on the level of the codes which constrain the constitutive variation of dialogues, actors' comportment, etc.)

(c) This tendency towards repetition which as we saw also expresses itself clearly through numerous relationships of partial similarity between shots (and beyond that between codes) carries with it a natural after-effect. It underscores the codic differences which give effectiveness to the basic variation constituted by the successive plurality of the shots. These differences are powerful and discrete in their distribution and transitions, having as their primary object to ensure the natural continuity of the narrative – that is to sustain its artifice, but without ever making it too obvious. A balance which in its own specific mode echoes that inscribed in the playing of the actors and the style of the photography.⁸

(d) This balance thus reveals a constant relationship from shot to shot between symmetry and dissymmetry, which is moreover reinforced by a general arrangement in the segment as a whole. In this respect we might recall the unequal deployment of the shots alternating between Vivian and Marlowe around the central axis represented by shot 7, which is itself inscribed into the alternation on another level. It is not surprising therefore that it should be the regulated opposition between the closing off of symmetries and the opening up of dissymmetries which gives rise to the narrative, to the very fact that there is a narrative.

A particular arrangement will however be noted which seems to me not specific to, but profoundly characteristic of the American cinema. The progressive relationship (in the literal sense) outlined above seems more or less to resolve itself within each unit of narration – in this case within a short segment of twelve shots which might be taken for a secondary transition – by means of a suspension and folding effect, as if to allow the segment to close back on itself more effectively and leave the new fold the problem of unrolling its new elements. Take the final shot for example. It is conclusive and synthetic undoubtedly, by virtue of Vivian's tender gesture which closes off the dialogue marked by their double avowal. But it is also so in another way: by the silence between the characters which only has its equivalent in shot 1, it ensures a kind of overall symmetry, but it is tipped over into dissymmetry so to speak because it is opposed to the shot it recalls through the identity it sustains with shots 2, 7, and 10, the final silence being the distinguishing mark.

1. Raymond Bellour/Christian Metz, 'Entretien sur la sémiologie du cinéma', *Semiotica*, Vol IV, 1971, part 1, p 10. For more detailed discussion, cf Christian Metz, *Essais sur la signification au cinéma*, Klincksieck, Paris, 1968, pp 130-131.
2. Particularly in a work in progress on Vincente Minnelli's *Gigi*.
3. Cf on this point the valuable distinctions established by Christian Metz 'Ponctuations et démarcations dans le film de diègèse', *Essais sur la signification au cinéma*, Vol II, Klincksieck, Paris, 1973 (especially pp 126-129).
4. *Ibid*, pp 120-21.
5. 'Génie de Howard Hawks', *Cahiers du Cinéma*, no 23, May 1953, p16.
6. On this opposition between specific and non-specific codes and the correlative ideas cinema/film cf the whole of Christian Metz' book *Langage et Cinéma*, Larousse, Paris 1971 [Language and Cinema, Mouton, 1974.] Following on Metz (cf more particularly pp 169-180) one might bring in here the notion of degree of specificity to establish a gradation between the specific codes: only the static/moving code is specific in an absolute way here. The pictorial arts have variations in scale and in angle, although within a radically different extension of the notion of a work or of textual closure. Film contains them within itself (except a film made up of a single shot filmed from a fixed camera position and without internal variation among the subjects filmed, in other words, almost a non-film), whereas it requires several paintings, etchings or photographs to constitute an equivalent variability. It is in this sense that the frame, while it is the smallest unit into which the filmic chain can be broken down, cannot be retained as a pertinent unit for the theory of cinema and film analysis except at the cost of prior loss of the notion of specificity.
7. Note here the difficulty sometimes encountered by clear distinctions. At a viewing, even a viewing slowed down by a projector which allows for reduction in speed, shot 11 appears to be silent, following a cut on Marlowe's admission 'I guess I am in love with you'. On the viewing table on the other hand, the 'you' seems fairly clearly to straddle the two shots. This effect is certainly not negligible since it was intended in the editing and it accentuates the motivational relation in the succession of the two shots. It suggests once again the need to question the theoretical status of all that is only clearly apparent on the level of the frame.
8. A distinction needs to be made here between these two methods of balance, which correspond to each other and support each other, both equally aimed at giving the illusion of naturalness by the regulated control of artifice. While both are *codified*, to the degree demanded by the need to produce the illusion, only the first is *coded*, ie capable of formulation into relatively strict systematic relationships. This is why the playing of the actors or the arrangements of tones in the image, which express themselves in the first case in terms of gestural dynamics and in the second in terms of intensity of light, resist analysis which inversely finds its chosen ground in the coded or codable elements (to stress clearly its character as a construction). It should be added that what falls to a greater extent into the codified in one instance may in another instance fall to a greater extent into the coded: for example the arrangement of lighting and certain features of the actors' playing in certain German expressionist films.

Translated and reprinted from *Cinéma: Théorie and Lectures*, a special issue of *Revue D'Esthétique*, Klincksieck, Paris 1973.

Kari Hanet

This paper examines a particular part of Samuel Fuller's film *Shock Corridor* (USA, 1965), a segment henceforth called 'the Waterfall', and analyses its function and place within the narrative discourse. An appendix presents in a diagrammatic form the film's syntagmatic order and a comparative table of the narrative plane and function of the privileged moments: ie the stages in the hunt for the murderer of one of the psychiatric hospital patients that John Barrett has set himself to discover.

The affect produced by the Waterfall is unique in the film; yet it is one of three segments distinguishable from the remainder of the film-text on several counts: for example, all three parts are heterogeneous to the body of the film-text and are shot in colour, whereas the film is otherwise in black and white. Why then this unique affect? Are not the function and place of this segment within the narrative structure of *Shock Corridor* completely or partially at odds with the place and function of the other two sequences?

The Narrative Context of Shock Corridor

Any narrative analysis of a text calls for clear distinction between the different aspects of the narrative reality, which are so often designated by the same term 'narrative'. Moreover, in recent film analysis, following Etienne Souriau,¹ the term 'diegesis' can be found to designate that which belongs to the fictional world presented by the film. This use of 'diegesis' is in contradistinction to the screen reality (ie optical and auditory) of the image. Since then, however, the study of narrative has become more sophisticated and its terms more precise. The work of Genette is particularly valuable in this field, and his distinctions² will be retained for use here. Briefly, Genette defines the narrative context of a narrative text thus: a *narrative discourse* or narrative signifier (or the *telling*), which includes the *diegesis* and *narration*. The *diegesis*, narrative content or signified, is 'what is being told', that is the object of the discourse, the actions and events themselves and their respective relationships. *Narration* designates HOW the discourse is being produced, the process itself. Quite evidently, however, only the narrative discourse is immediately accessible to textual analysis, since narration and diegesis exist only by virtue of the existence of a narrative text; on the other hand, narrative discourse only exists by virtue of a twofold relation: as narrative, with the diegesis it tells; as discourse, with the narration producing it.

Moreover, since many a narrative will in fact comprise more than one 'story', the one boxed into the other in 'Russian doll'

fashion, as for instance in Diderot's *Jacques le Fataliste* or Pré-vost's *Manon Lescaut*, the notion of 'diegesis' must be further distinguished. When in a narrative, one of the characters begins to tell a story, that story is defined as a secondary diegesis, or as Genette puts it, a *meta-diegesis*,³ while the first story is a primary diegesis. Distinction between primary and secondary diegesis is founded on a consideration of the status⁴ of the narrator and of the narrative context.

Now, to return to the narrative context of *Shock Corridor*, after a quotation from Euripides, 'Whom God wishes to destroy, He first makes mad', the small circular field of vision, centre of frame, widens to reveal a full-frame image of an empty corridor in a mental hospital. A voice-over commentary says: 'My name is John Barrett, I am a reporter, and this is my true story', after which the credits appear. *Shock Corridor* is thus, seemingly, a story whose narrator and hero is John Barrett; his status being an extra-diegetic-homodiegetic one, since John Barrett, as first degree narrator, tells his own story. Briefly, Johnny tells how he discovered who murdered one of the patients in a mental hospital by becoming a patient himself under the guise of sexual perversion towards his sister (part assumed by his lover, Cathy).

However, the film does not end with Johnny's story, two further sequences are yet to follow. In the first, Cathy is seen discussing Johnny's case with the hospital doctor. Their dialogue informs us that a week has elapsed since Johnny 'cracked' the murder story to the papers; yet he remains in the hospital, a dumb imbecile – at which moment the camera pans right to reveal Johnny seated nearby, present at the conversation. In the other, a new arrival is shown into the corridor where all the well-behaved patients may congregate; there among other now familiar faces is Johnny, now one of the inmates. The same quotation from Euripides appears once more, underlining the film-text's ethical message, and folding the text back onto its beginning. Johnny's story, moreover, is punctuated by the telling of a parallel series of events; each of Cathy's visits is followed by sequences showing her reactions and those of Johnny's boss and his psychiatrist friend to Johnny's mental deterioration. Thus, two diegeses develop in inverse order. As Johnny gets closer to unmasking the killer, his sanity decreases until, at the end, discovery of the killer's name annuls Johnny, since particularly and significantly he loses his faculty of speech.

Johnny's story is not then, as it first appeared, the diegesis of *Shock Corridor*. While the opening shot led us to believe that what was to follow was a diegesis in the past tense, the closing sequences, in fact, occur chronologically after the opening shot. Johnny's opening statement takes place at a time situated between the moment Johnny has squeezed a confession out of the criminal attendant and asked if *now* he might be allowed to telephone his paper, and the scene involving Cathy and the doctor, during which

20 spatiotemporal continuity is carried by Cathy's dialogue, as already noted. The diegesis of *Shock Corridor*, therefore, is defined by the world outside the mental hospital with its events and characters, and, while it does begin in the past, a past prior to Johnny's entry into the hospital, it continues beyond Johnny's story and ends in a diegetic present. This diegesis is further distinguished from Johnny's story by a different focus of narration, his story being mainly seen from within, whereas the main diegesis is narrated from an external focal point. Consequently, Johnny's story is on a different narrative plane, one which is nevertheless included in the diegesis; it is a secondary diegesis, or metadiegesis.

The Coloured Hallucinations

Of the stories narrated to Johnny during his illegitimate stay, only two will concern us here. Both are dreams and both appear in colour, whereas the film is in black and white. The use of colour is explicitly motivated by each of the patient-narrators. Each of these tertiary diegeses, or meta-metadiegeses, are disjunct in space and time from the secondary diegesis, Johnny's story. The first takes place in Asia, the other in the Amazon. Not only is it clear from the narrative context that these are dreams and that the patients themselves are narrating them, but also each is re-marked⁵ by the patient's voice-over commentary.

Each dream is told by a witness to the murder Johnny is investigating; then, following the pattern established in the film that after a hallucination comes a moment of sanity, Johnny is able to ask who is the killer. Thus, their narrative function is to provide Johnny with a clue; the first witness tells him that the killer was a member of staff, the second one that the murderer was an attendant, not a doctor. The third and final clue, the killer's name, is given by the mathematician (a third patient) in a sequence not narrated but 'lived' of an auditory hallucination, therefore not seen in colour. Nevertheless, the function of that moment is nullified since Johnny immediately flies into a rage, followed by temporary amnesia and only after Johnny has himself experienced a hallucination does he remember the killer's name. This hallucination, though mainly in black and white, does culminate in a coloured, heterogeneous insert, the Waterfall, thus marking the third and final stage in the search for the killer. In fact, use of colour and the heterogeneity of these segments signify not merely different levels of sanity but narrative economy in charting the progress of Johnny's investigation. Thus, quite logically, these narration marks are displaced onto the climactic moment of Johnny's own hallucination, leaving the actual disclosure of the third and final clue un-marked and therefore inoperative. However, only the first two hallucinations are marked by an intradiegetic realist motivation – the patient-narrator says that he always dreams that dream in colour – the third, the Waterfall, appears under quite unique circumstances.

The Waterfall

Seven brief shots of a waterfall, linked by cuts, form the denotative plane of this segment. The angle and scale of both first and seventh shots are similar, the camera panning right to reveal the upper edge of the fall, then downward, interrupted three-quarter way in the first instance, but, in the last, reaching the froth at the foot of the fall. The other shots are medium-close shots of gushing water taken at the foot of the fall from different angles, the focus remaining nonetheless centre of frame. The iconicity of this segment is further determined by the illusion of movement – water is *falling* and the illusion of sound – halfway through the first shot the sound of thunder is replaced by the sound of cascading water – which re-marks the object on the screen, a redundancy typical of realist texts where referential illusion is the predominant effect.

The Narrative Context. The Waterfall is situated within a hallucination sequence, Johnny's 'storm hallucination', which, like the auditory hallucinations in the film, is neither narrated (there is no voice-over commentary), nor is it marked by a disjunction in space and time (which would clearly indicate a shift in narrative plane) or an opposition in colour (narration thereby marking the degree of diegetic reality of the sequence). And unlike the coloured hallucinations, this one is symbolic:

'Filmic implications at the level of connotation, always have a more or less symbolic character; by this I mean that the diegetic element, while retaining its literal meaning, is enriched by a supplementary value which it could not have claimed on its own but is conferred upon it through its interplay with the context.'⁶

The hospital corridor, one moment, looks normal, the next, it is deserted, leaving Johnny alone in the ensuing thunderstorm. He has been struggling for some time and lightning has just struck him amid a more deafening thunder clap, though thunder is present throughout, when the waterfall appears. The sound of thunder, carried through into the first shot of the waterfall, is then replaced by the sound of water falling, which, in turn, in the last shot is replaced by Johnny's scream. The relay⁷ is completed by a brief medium close-up of a screaming Johnny, still on the floor, drenched. His scream dies out on a image of a dry Johnny, seated on the bench as before.

Thus, while the narrative plane remains the same, the narrative focus during this hallucination sequence has altered. Johnny *was* narrating how he discovered who murdered one of the patients in the mental hospital. Yet, suddenly, Johnny is no longer the narrator; 'he who speaks' no longer corresponds to 'he who sees'; the narrator of the storm hallucination is outside that narrative sequence and is the narrator of the film-text.

Furthermore, shortly before lightning strikes Johnny and the waterfall appears, two black and white single shots, representing

22 the two men who gave Johnny his second and third clue, are intercut into this hallucination. Although these two inserts do possess diegetic reality and could be said to 'recall' two of the stages in Johnny's search for the killer's name, they do not belong to the spatio-temporal reality of the storm hallucination sequence. Thus, to follow Metz's terminology, they might be identified as 'non-diegetic' inserts, their narrative function being to hint at a comparison between these two mad people and Johnny. The effect produced by this narrative procedure or mode of telling then questions the reality of this sequence, since, at this stage in the narration, its hallucinatory nature has not yet been 'confirmed', ie, re-marked. Nevertheless, the narrative function of this whole sequence, as in the case of the two earlier coloured hallucinations, is to produce a moment of sanity, that is the recollection of the third clue, the killer's name.

Yet, only one part is in colour, the waterfall itself. Disjunct in space and time, related to it by water only, the waterfall (like the two inserts in black and white) stands outside the narrative plane of the thunderstorm sequence and of Johnny's story. Thus, the mark of the narrative function of this sequence, the use of colour, has been displaced onto one particular part, thereby linking it with the other two coloured and disjunct sequences. While this does re-mark the waterfall as also a moment of madness for the viewer, it further masks the hallucinatory nature of the thunderstorm sequence (hence its narrative function as an operative stage in Johnny's discovery of the murderer) and the fact that the mode of narration has changed. This, of course, is quite correct practice in a realist film whose work is to efface the process of narration (by repetition, over-determination, and often transparency of the narrator) in order to produce a perfect referential illusion. For instance, unlike the auditory hallucinations in the film, where disjunction and hallucinatory status are carried by the sound track, and only re-marked by Johnny's perplexed reaction, these other hallucinations are much over-determined. Even the storm hallucination is re-marked by Johnny touching his clothes and those of his neighbour, astonished to find them dry. Yet, by assimilating the Waterfall-segment to the other coloured hallucinations, its specificity is hidden.

Narrative text/Significance. Unlike the two black and white earlier inserts that question the reality of the sequence, the waterfall functions as a diegetic symbol, signifying that Johnny has finally gone mad; the pertinent features here being the movement of the cascade and the force with which the water falls, re-marked by the cinematic treatment (ie by narration).

Yet, the viewer perceives additional ambiguous, unspecifiable 'meanings',⁸ that pertain not to the narrative context, but to the imagery itself, to the way the movement and the force of the tumbling water affect him. While the viewer has been prepared for

a climactic moment by the crescendo of thunder and lightning, the waterfall, a symbolic and disjunct image, produces an affect that transgresses the boundaries of the narrative discourse. As Barthes writes in his analysis of a still from *Ivan the Terrible*,

'something in these two faces *exceeds* psychology, anecdote, function, and in short, meaning, though without being reduced to the persistence which any human body exerts in its mere presence, its Dasein. In opposition to the first two levels, that of communication and that of signification, this third level – even if my reading of it is still risky – is that of Significance ('signifiante'); this word has the advantage of referring to the field of the Signifier (and not of signification) and of joining, by a path marked out by Julia Kristeva, who has proposed the term, a semiotics of the text.'⁹

This something else perceived as extra, this excess, Barthes calls the 'third meaning' or 'obtuse meaning', recognising in its affect two major areas, emotion and eroticism. In this case, the 'obtuse meaning' of the waterfall suggests such directions as release of evil forces; repression of consciousness; orgasm; and by the cry points to Johnny's rebirth into mute insanity. The 'obtuse meaning' is not structurally situated, it is discontinuous, and as Barthes puts it, 'it frustrates meaning – subverting not the content but the entire practice of meaning'.¹⁰ It refuses anchorage, appearing as 'an expenditure without exchange', which on the contrary characterises symbolic activity: a contract or exchange is established between a signifier and a signified.

In a narrative discourse then, the 'third meaning' (for Barthes) is 'clearly counter-narrative'¹¹; but *counter-diegetic* would be more appropriate, since the 'third meaning' only breaks the prevailing order and spatio-temporal continuity, it does not rupture the discourse itself, on the contrary. Indeed, desire plays a fundamental role in the production and in the reading of narrative texts. As Sylvie Pierre¹² pointed out in a reply to Barthes, Eisenstein had understood the need for a sexual expenditure of energy in artistic practice in order to produce the viewer's active participation, ie that he *read* the film. While his theory of pathos and his conception of montage as attraction and conflict hint towards this role, Eikhenbaum's conception of film language as internal speech does in fact lead him to discuss the question, though not in explicit terms.¹³

In *Révolution du Langage Poétique*¹⁴ however, Julia Kristeva does so explicitly. Her description of a text as a signifying operation involving a *process*, the 'geno-text' and a *structure*, the 'pheno-text', is worth quoting at some length:

'The geno-text comprises all the semiotic processes, that is the instincts (*Triebe*), their dispositions and mapping out of the body,

- 24 and the ecological and social system surrounding the body (in other words, the surrounding objects, the pre-oedipal relations with the parents); it also includes the eruption of the symbolic order (the emergence of object and subject, the constitution of nodes of meanings charted by semantic fields and categories).'¹⁵

In the space thus organised, the subject is not yet a split entity that will fade and give rise to the symbolic; instead it is being *generated* as such through a process of facilitation and marks bound by the biological and social structure.

'The geno-text must be separated out from the various systems articulating a given text; from the phonematic system, ie the accumulation and repetition of phonemes, rhyme, etc; from the melodic system, ie intonation, rhythm, etc; as well as from the arrangement of the semantic fields and categories as they appear in their syntactic and logical peculiarities, or in the economy of the *mimesis*, that is phantasy, suspended denotation, narrative, etc.'

Thus 'while it is apprehended through language, the geno-text is not however linguistic, that is, not in the sense given to the term by structural and generative linguistics. It is a *process* that tends to articulate into ephemeral (threatened by instinctual charges [...]) and non-signifying structures (systems with no double articulation) the following series: (i) instinctual dyads; (ii) the body and ecological continuum; (iii) the social organism and the family structures translating the constraints of the mode of production; (iv) the matrices of enunciation producing "types" of discourses for literary history, "psychic structures" for psychiatry and psychoanalysis, different distributions of the protagonists of the enunciation for the linguistic study of discourse in Jakobson's sense. In other words, these matrices of enunciation are the result of the reiteration of instinctual charges (i) under biological, ecological, social and familial constraints (ii, iii), and the stabilisation of their facilitation (*Bahnung*) into stases whose symbolisation is favoured and stamped by the surrounding structure.'

The geno-text therefore underpins the pheno-text, the language for communicating. The latter remains dissociated and split from the semiotic process activating the geno-text. The pheno-text is a structure, obeying the laws of communication and positing a subject of enunciation and a receiver. The geno-text, on the other hand, is a process passing through relatively and transiently bound zones, a route free from the blocking bipolarity of univocal information between full subjects.

All signifying practices are generated in this manner, they cannot be produced in any other way, since all signifying processes become realised in language, even if their realisation does not

make use of verbal language. Any theoretical attempt to understand signifying processes must then be approached through language.

No signifying practice, however, encompasses the infinite totality of the process described. Numerous constraints, which in the last instance are socio-political, stop the signifying process, immobilise its course into a given structure, and hence eliminate the *practice* by the setting of fragmented symbolic *matrices*, the tracings of social constraints obliterating the infinity of the process; the pheno-text translates these obliterations. In the capitalist mode of production, only certain literary avant-garde texts, among the numerous signifying practices, manage to travel the infinity of the process, 'to reach the semiotic *chora* that modifies the linguistic structures (Mallarmé, Joyce)'. Such a course, however, tends to produce a text that excludes any political or social signified:

'Only recently, or in revolutionary periods, has a signifying practice inscribed in the pheno-text the process of signification, in its plurality, heterogeneity, and contradiction, thus embracing the instinctual flux, the material discontinuity, the political struggle and the pulverising of language.'

This situation is clearly reflected in the cinema, where the semiotic process is quasi-eliminated from most filmic texts. Occasionally though, as in *Shock Corridor*, the semiotic process does erupt out of the boundaries set by the symbolic order, as excess, threatening its position, as negativity, transgression of that order. Even then, however, such a rupturing of the structure must be masked in these over-determined discourses. Thus, the Waterfall, as semiotic activity, is doubly marked by narration; first, by using colour it is assigned the narrative function of the sequence within which it is placed and, secondly, its syntagmatic position defines for it a symbolic diegetic function, which it exceeds. That excess clearly puts it on the plane of the narrative discourse, that is, the locus of interplay between narrative signifier and 'signifi-*fiance*', symbolic order and semiotic process.

* * *

Note on Notion of the Filmic/A reply to Barthes

This semiotic activity instanced by the Waterfall is not only indissolubly bound up with the production of the discourse, it is also an intrinsic part of the filmic process itself. Indeed, to stop the projection at that moment annihilates the meaning it generates, since the function of the waterfall is as much in the break in spatio-temporal continuity as in the imagery itself.

Thus, this unique moment in *Shock Corridor* may be identified as a *filmic* moment. By *filmic* Barthes means 'the third meaning, which we can locate theoretically, but not describe, then appears

1. Syntagmatic disposition of the narrative discourse

the narrative discourse									
the diegesis			the secondary diegesis, Johnny's story						
Corridor			Cathy visit	Asia Hallucination	Cathy visit	Amazon Hain	Cathy visit	Auditory Hain	Storm Hain
				1		2		(3)	W A T E R 3 fall

2. Comparative Table

		Asia Sequence	Amazon Sequence	Auditory Sequence	Storm Sequence	Waterfall Segment
NARRATION	Colour	+	+	-	+	+
NARRATIVE FUNCTION	Meta-diegetic	+	+	-	+	-
	Diegetic	+	+	+	-	+
NARRATIVE PLANE	Meta-metadiegetic	+	+	-	+	-
	Meta-diegetic	-	-	+	-	-
	Diegetic	-	-	-	-	-
	Narrative discourse	-	-	-	-	+

as the *transition* from language to significance ("significance") and as the founding act of the filmic itself'.¹⁶ This notion of the filmic, in fact, designates similar moments in literary texts currently referred to as instances of 'textuality', ie the presence of the geno-text in the pheno-text, the eruption of the semiotic process.

Barthes then goes on to say that 'the filmic, quite paradoxically, cannot be grasped in the film as it is shown, "in movement", "au naturel", but only, as yet, in that major artifact which is the still'.¹⁷ At the same time, he adds that 'the authentic filmic (the filmic of the future) is not in movement, but in a third meaning'. Here Barthes appears to be confusing discussion of a specific mode of textual production in film, the kind of signifying practice described by Kristeva above, with the old question of the essence of film (here the still versus the moving image). He is not speaking of the production of meaning in film, which on the contrary involves fixity *and* mobility. The specifically filmic textual practice that Barthes is concerned with must therefore be found instead on the spectrum of mobility and fixity, not at either pole.¹⁸

Notes

1. E Souriau, *l'Univers filmique*, Flammarion, Paris 1953, preface p 7; also in Metz, *Essais sur la Signification au Cinéma*, volume 1, Klincksieck, Paris 1968, p 100.
2. G Genette, *Figures III*, Seuil, Paris 1972, p 72.
3. Genette, *op cit* pp 238-9; *metadiegesis* works in inverse order to its logico-linguistic model (meta-language), but Genette preferred to keep the simpler and more frequent term, *diegesis*, for the world of the first degree narrative.
4. Genette, *op cit* pp 255-6. The status of the narrator is defined by the narrative plane to which it belongs (extra-/intra- diegetic) and in relation to the diegesis (hetero-/homo- diegetic).
5. Re-marked, because from the narrative context, the relation between the heterogeneity of space and time and the patient's obsession, ie the metaphor, is easily readable.
6. Metz, 'Current Problems of Film Theory: C Metz on J Mitry's *L'Esthétique et Psychologie du Cinéma*, Vol II', *Screen*, v 14 n 1/2, Spring 1973, p 73.
7. Relay is produced by the combination of two heterogeneous connotators. Cf Barthes in 'Rhetoric of the Image', *Working Papers in Cultural Studies* No 1, Spring 1971, pp 37-50.
8. Cf Barthes, 'Le Troisième Sens' in *Cahiers du Cinéma* No 222, juillet 1970; English translation 'The Third Meaning', *Art Forum*, vol XI, No 5, January 1973, pp 46-50. Barthes distinguishes three levels of meaning: (i) an informational level; (ii) a symbolic level or level of signification as opposed to the first level as one of communication; (iii) a third level: 'an evident, erratic, and persistent meaning', an *obscure* meaning alongside the *obvious* meaning of the second level.

9. Barthes, *op cit Art Forum*, p 46.
10. Cf *ibid* p 49.
11. Barthes, 'The Third Meaning', *Art Forum*, p 49.
12. Sylvie Pierre, 'Eléments pour une théorie du photogramme', *Cahiers du Cinéma* No 226-227, Janvier-Février 1971, pp 75-83, especially pp 81-2.
13. Cf S M Eisenstein, 'Dickens, Griffith and the Film Today', *Film Form*, Denis Dobson, London 1963, 2nd Ed, pp 249-251. Eikhenbaum, 'Problems of Film Stylistics', *Screen* v 15 n 3, Autumn 1974 and P Willemen in this issue of *Screen*.
14. J Kristeva, *La Révolution du Langage Poétique*, Seuil, Paris 1974, Ch 1 'Sémiotique et Symbolique', especially pp 83-86.
15. This semiotic process occurs *after* symbolic ordering has taken place; it must not be confused, therefore, with that pre-oedipal semiotic activity preceding the mirror-stage.
16. Barthes, *op cit Art Forum*, p 50.
17. Barthes, *op cit* p 50.
18. Cf T Kuntzel, 'Le défilement', in *Cinéma: Théorie, Lectures, Revue d'Esthétique*, Klincksieck, Paris 1973, p 110. Also S Pierre, *op cit*, p 77: 'It then appears that the cinema does not possess two bodies, the one a-temporal, the discontinuous chain of immobile photogrammes, the other temporal, the unfolding of the images: *the cinema has one body, bearing the inscription of time*' (my italics).

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Editorial Note

The last issue of Screen contained an article on and articles by Osip Brik, one of the editors of Lef, the journal published by the Left Front of the Arts in the Soviet Union in the 1920's, and v 12 n 4 carried much material from Lef and Novy Lef, its successor, including discussion of some of the films of Sergei Eisenstein, who was himself on the editorial board of Novy Lef. However, Screen has not directly discussed Eisenstein's own theoretical writings. We are therefore glad to publish David Bordwell's careful reading of those writings, especially so in an issue of Screen containing two articles on Eikhenbaum's concept of 'inner speech' as the method of 'divination' of the filmic image, a concept which, as Bordwell shows, had an important place in Eisenstein's later theorising. However, some of Bordwell's points need, it seems to me, to be queried, and his central thesis perhaps nuanced, partly in the light of the problematic that these articles reveal.

Firstly what is perhaps a merely terminological point: the use of the adjective 'materialist' to describe Pavlovian behaviourist psychology. The fact of having a neurological and hence physico-chemical basis in the theory of the reflex arc is not enough to make behaviourism materialist. Materialism is an attitude to discourses and practices, including those discourses and practices with scientific claims – a 'world outlook' as the Marxist tradition has always claimed – not an a priori definition of the concepts of any science, and if a science can be described, rather metaphorically, as 'materialist', this is insofar as the role of that scientific practice in a particular conjuncture is to deflect attitudes in a materialist direction. At present, to my mind, psychoanalysis has far better claims than reflexology to the epithet 'materialist', whether or no Freud's dream of giving it a neurological basis is ever fulfilled. Moreover, it seems difficult to argue, as Bordwell does, that Eisenstein's later theory finds less support in the classic texts of dialectical materialism than his earlier ones; he is able to find as many, and as apt, quotations from Engels for his 1935 speech as he did quotations from Lenin for the texts of 1929.

*Second, the charge that associationism is the psychology underlying all Eisenstein's later theory seems somewhat one-sided. It is true that in particular passages from the essay 'Word and Image' in *The Film Sense* suggest that ideas are linked together by the private memories of the individual and hence invite the charge of appeal to 'private language'; but Eisenstein is concerned to give these 'private' associations the necessary support to make them apt for public communication, and he proposes at least two means to this end.*

The first, outlined in the 1935 speech 'Film Form: New Problems', is an appeal to the notion of inner speech as developed by Eikhenbaum, and more especially by Vygotsky. (The work in the Moscow Neuro-surgical Clinic referred to in the speech is presumably that of Luria, one of Vygotsky's disciples; the reference shows, incidentally, that this theory had claims to a neurological basis just as much as the behaviourists' did.) Inner speech is not a private language in Wittgenstein's sense; it is a specialised variant of ordinary communicative language, whose words are largely its words. How the interpretation of images can be anchored in inner speech is explained by Eikhenbaum in 'Problems of Film Stylistics' (Screen v 15 n 3) and by the two commentaries on it in this issue of Screen, but it is perhaps not inappropriate to note here that Eisenstein's association in 'Word and Image' of 'five o'clock' and 'tea' finds an anchorage in the French Anglicism 'le five-o'clock', meaning afternoon tea, which was a part of the polite French familiar to any Russian of Eisenstein's bourgeois background. As for the peculiar properties of inner speech, which are what interest Eisenstein in the 1935 speech, the fact that in the main it is only available to investigation through introspection does not make them uninvestigable. Modern linguistic theories, both European structuralist and transformationalist, have overcome the distributionalist prejudice against introspective tests: only a native speaker can tell whether a change in an element of expression produces a change in the content, or whether a sentence is grammatical; what matters is for the investigator to establish the structure underlying the set of all his informant's (or his own) introspective judgements and, most important, to work out the possible types of such structures. This is what Vygotsky attempts to do for inner speech. He is no associationist – indeed he attacks behaviourism on the grounds that 'reflexology . . . has translated associationism into the language of physiology' (Thought and Language, p 95). His theory of language is a genetic structuralist one like that of Piaget, in polemic with whom he developed it. He locates inner speech's introspectively established features within this theory of language as structured both by its various functions and by the stages via which it is learnt. It is the developmental side of this theory that interested Eisenstein. Vygotsky saw inner speech as developing simultaneously with communicative speech but along a divergent path from the egocentric speech of the child, and its main structural feature as the hypertrophy of the predicate. For Eisenstein, however (and here I think Ronald Levaco in his article in this issue of Screen follows Eisenstein's reading of Vygotsky), inner speech as manifested in art combines features of (both phylogenetically and ontogenetically) primitive language with the highest forms of all – it represents a combined regression and sublimation. Hence its affective charge and (despite Bordwell's claim that tension is smoothed out in the later Eisenstein's theories) its

extreme tension: 'The affectiveness of a work of art is built upon the fact that there takes place in it a dual process: an impetuous progressive rise along the lines of the highest explicit steps of consciousness and a simultaneous penetration by means of the structure of the form into the layers of the profoundest sensual thinking. The polar separation of these two lines of flow creates that remarkable tension of unity of form and content characteristic of true art-works' (Film Form, pp 144-145). Here Eisenstein is verging on a truly Freudian Theory of art (cf 'The Writer and Day-dreaming'). If he is to be criticised, it is not for associationism, but for the evolutionist and geneticist bias that the influence of Vygotsky gave his approach to Freudian concepts.

The second support Eisenstein provides for 'associations' is the *obraz* or 'image', which is what makes him, as Bordwell argues, the 'subtlest theorist of context whom the cinema has yet seen'. In 1948, Eisenstein defined montage as the 'destruction of the indefinite and neutral (bytie), existing "in itself", no matter whether it be an event or a phenomenon, and its reassembly in accordance with the idea dictated by attitude to this event or phenomenon, an attitude which, in its turn, is determined by my ideology, my outlook, that is to say, our ideology, our outlook. . . . It is at that moment that a living dynamic image (*obraz*) takes place of passive reproduction' (Notes of a Film Director, p 124). The artist's attitude to his theme is communicated by the establishment in the work itself of a novel system of equivalences (and antinomies) between the elements of its material (in the last analysis, the montage fragments) which casts all that material, and the theme, in a new light. This notion of the image was developed simultaneously by the Prague structuralist aestheticians, is familiar to us in the modern structuralist analysis of poetry (Jakobson, Ruwet, etc) and has deeply influenced all the varieties of modern Soviet structuralism (Lotman, Zholkovsky and Shcheglov). What is important for our purposes here, however, is that the concept, if not the term, is clearly present in Eisenstein's writings before 1930. Thus in 'The Creative Principle and the Ideogram' (1929) he compares incongruities of framing between montage fragments with Sharaku's distortions: 'By combining these incongruities we newly collect the disintegrated event into one whole, but in our aspect, according to the treatment of our relation to the event' (Film Form, p 34). Viewed in the light of this concept, the analyses of *October* and *Ivan the Terrible* offered as a contrast by Bordwell are perhaps not so different after all: both reveal the mastering of a set of incongruities in an artistic image. *October* and *Ivan* are very different, but this is because the latter has a plot in the conventional sense of a closed narration of the fate of a character or characters, while the former, though it has a dominant diegesis, does not have a plot in this sense. But for all that, the later Eisenstein never accepted Pudovkin's triad theme-plot(*syuzhet*)-

32 montage; the middle term for him was image (obraz), and the plot in the later films is subordinate to the image, determined by it, as the essay 'True Ways of Invention' (1946) in Notes of a Film Director shows for Alexander Nevsky.

The problem of Eisenstein's aesthetic theory is that at all stages unity prevails over heterogeneity and incongruity – even kabuki is made into a monistic ensemble. 'A Dialectic Approach to Film Form' (1929) contains a revealing analogy: the affective power of the combination of montage elements is compared to the dynamic effect of movement achieved by the retinal reception of the projected sequence of still but slightly discrepant frames. At all stages Eisenstein tends to argue that the discrepancies between the montage elements are abolished (aufgehoben) in the final result, their only heritage being the dynamism, the emotional heightening of that result. In the early period, the intellectual concept is the resultant of all the physical and physiological movements of the lower levels of montage methods; in the later, the obraz is a giant trope for the theme. Eisenstein never saw montage as the deliberate promotion of the heterogeneity itself for aesthetic and political effect, which is what it always meant for the German practitioners of montage, and for Brecht in particular. This of course with reference to Eisenstein's theorising; that such a use of montage is detectable in his films is shown, for example, by Barthes's discussion of The General Line in 'Diderot, Brecht, Eisenstein' (Screen v 15 n 2).

Thus I would suggest that a comparison between Eisenstein's earlier and later writings reveals less contrast than Bordwell argues, and that the comparison does not unequivocally favour the former. But this nuancing of Bordwell's thesis in no way detracts from its importance, and the rigour with which he presents it.

BEN BREWSTER

Eisenstein's Epistemological Shift

David Bordwell

Much modern film theory has treated Eisenstein *en bloc*: writers as disparate as Bazin, Metz, Perkins, and Tudor have assumed that a single homogeneous system rules his essays. As a result, the theoretical focus has been upon local inconsistencies (such as those pointed out by Peter Wollen). This essay proposes a re-reading of Eisenstein's theoretical writings which disputes the assumption that only a single theoretical system is at work there. If we assume that a film theory consists, at least, of an ontology, an epistemology and an aesthetic of cinema, we find a marked schism in Eisenstein's *œuvre*: one autonomous theory dominates the 1923-

1930 phase of his career, another dominates the 1930-1948 phase. 33 Such a rupture proceeds, I believe, from an epistemological shift: Eisenstein's aesthetic positions are decisively shaped by the theory of mind he presumes at each phase. From this perspective, what seem to be inconsistencies in one large theory may be seen as local differences between two successive theories. This re-reading, however, leaves the way open for an analysis of the deeper contradictions within the systems themselves. What follows, then, is a delineation of the two theoretical structures in Eisenstein's thought as they are shaped by two epistemological positions.

I

Eisenstein's early theory is philosophically, historically, and scientifically materialist. He follows Engels and Lenin in assuming that matter is the ultimate form of being and that the mind is reducible to material functions. He posits the Marxist vision of history as a series of dialectical moments determined by material conditions. Most centrally, Eisenstein relies upon a physiological materialism borrowed, as is well-known, from Pavlovian reflexology. Early Soviet Marxism as a whole eagerly embraced Pavlov's reduction of all behaviour to material laws, but Eisenstein owes him a special debt. Every science needs its 'simple', its common denominator of measurement. For Pavlov, the reflex as a response to a stimulus constitutes such a common denominator: publically observable, experimentally variable, the reflex was seen as the elemental unit out of which all behaviour could be constructed. Eisenstein uses this position in order to see art as a set of procedures for stimulating certain responses. 'The work of art . . . is first of all a tractor, which works to plough up the psychology of the spectator in a given class direction'.¹ In his essay on his production of *Every Wise Man* he writes: 'The spectator himself constitutes the basic material of the theatre; the objective of every utilitarian theatre . . . is to guide the spectator in the desired direction (frame of mind)'.² If the perceiver's total physiological state is the target, the artist becomes a calculator of stimulants, plotting the trajectory of the aesthetic missile. Like Pavlov, then, Eisenstein the scientific theorist begins with a fundamental physiological unit of measurement; he would later describe his early work as 'the theory of artistic stimulants'.³

But what in an art work may function as a common denominator of stimulation? In the first years of his theorising (1923-c 1926), Eisenstein identifies the 'attraction' as this basic unit. The attraction is anything that makes us gasp, a burst of aggressive shock, a *coup de théâtre*. An attraction is 'any aggressive aspect of the theatre; that is, any element of the theatre that subjects the spectator to a sensual or psychological impact, experimentally regulated and mathematically calculated to produce in him certain emotional

34 shocks'.⁴ In 1927, however, Eisenstein substitutes for the 'attraction' a more general conception of a common denominator: the conventionalised 'sign'. Beginning with the assumption that culture, ideology, and the art medium all give birth to specific artistic conventions, Eisenstein uses Japanese culture as a privileged instance of how such conventions function. In kabuki theatre he finds a 'monistic ensemble' in which all perceptual materials function 'as elements of equal significance'.⁵ In one kabuki play, when a man leaves a surrendered castle, his departure is given in a procession of purely conventionalised stimulants: movement of the actor, substitution of a new background screen, a dark curtain lowered behind the actor, and finally the music of the samisen. The ensemble is for Eisenstein truly monistic, for there is a correlation in an absolute realm among various sensory materials: 'Whatever notes I can't take with my voice, I'll show with my hands!'⁶ The absolute realm, the ultimate monism, is of course materialist and physiological, and kabuki is thus seen as a 'provocation of the human brain'.⁷ Similarly, in the Japanese ideogram, haiku, and masks, Eisenstein locates various types of conventional signs (non-depictive and arbitrary vs depictive and 'logical') and compares cinema images to 'depictive' hieroglyphs. In short, the conventional sign is the common denominator of the art work which may be correlated with a unit of physiological response.

Either as 'attraction' or conventional sign, the basic unit remains only a fragment without a theory of structure. Eisenstein's solution is famous: montage. But contrary to general belief, for both early and late Eisenstein, montage is not merely a kind of editing. It constitutes a principle of combining basic elements into an effective context. Montage of attractions, for example, is seen as a way of integrating separate effects into a thematic whole, while montage of depictive signs is seen as a kind of artistic syntax. In either case, Eisenstein's early theory makes montage a principle of *tension* between parts. As early as 1923, he opposed the concept of 'harmonic composition' in staging. Like three-ring circus 'attractions', theatrical attractions are potentially equal, and thus refuse to merge in a smooth synthesis: 'Ostyzhev's "chatter" *no more than* the colour of the prima donna's tights, a stroke on the kettledrum *as much as* a soliloquy of Romeo, the cricket on the hearth *no less than* a salvo under the seats of the spectator'.⁸ Moreover, like the Constructivists in painting, Eisenstein emphasises the diversity of materials employed in montage assembly: a revolutionary art work must 'integrate dialectically in a series of materials some methods of elaboration which are not proper to this series but which belong to a different series'.⁹ Most elaborately, he insists that cinematic montage is an act of *collision*, not only between shots but to some degree within shots ('Conflict within the shot is potential montage'¹⁰). Montage is thus a characteristic modernist notion, seeing the art work's context not on the

analogy of organic unity but on that provided by physics: unity is the dynamic tension of interacting particles. 35

The foundations of Eisenstein's dynamic conception of montage are not solely to be found in avant-garde practice predominant in Russia at the moment (eg, montage and collage experiments of Futurism and Constructivism, Formalist literary theory), for he also taps profound currents of Marxist-Leninist theory of the dialectic. Two of Engels' proposed laws of dialectic are particularly apposite to Eisenstein's theory. First, the law of the unity and conflict of opposites stresses that every system – mathematics, science, society – is revealed to be composed necessarily of contradictory tendencies sustained in dynamic conflict. Plus/minus, action/reaction, capital/proletariat: each pair is bound together as a set of oppositions. Extending this to aesthetics, Eisenstein sees art's nature as composed of a conflict between the organic inertia of passive nature and deliberate creation, neither of which can alone create art works: 'At the intersection of Nature and Industry stands Art'.¹¹ More local conflicts in a given art medium (eg, rhythm/metre, proportion/distortion, etc) simply reveal the general conflict at work. Thus montage becomes a specific instance of the dialectic in the very ontology of art.

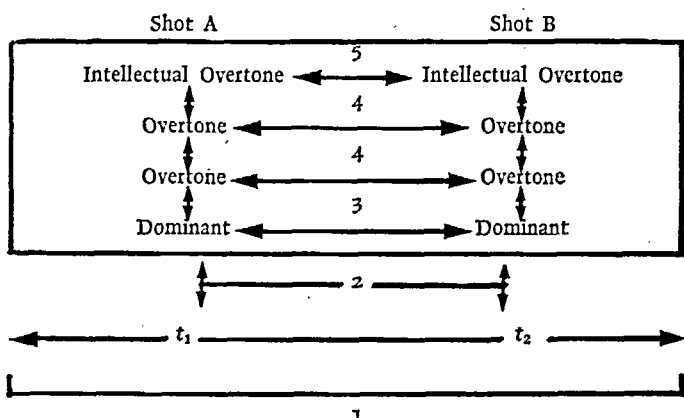
Even more directly pertinent is that law of dialectics which Engels calls the transformation of quantity into quality: 'Qualitative changes can occur only by the quantitative addition or subtraction of matter or motion (so-called energy)'.¹² Increase the speed of water molecules and at some point they will be transformed into steam; increase the capital possessed by a class in a feudal economy and the system will transform itself into a bourgeois economy. Eisenstein insists that in cinema the same 'multiplicative' process obtains, thus placing himself in opposition to what he perceives as the Kuleshov-Pudovkin 'additive' view of linkage-editing. The transformation of quantity into quality, the dialectical leap into a new dimension – this conception rules Eisenstein's conception of montage at every level of film form. At the very base of filmic perception, the simple superimposition of one frame upon another engenders a qualitative leap: perceived motion. At the level of the individual shot, Eisenstein insists that the shot is not a montage *element* (ie, passive, inert), but a montage *cell*. The analogy only apparently lapses into organicist aesthetics; the shot-as-cell concept introduces the possibility of fission, of an energy unleashed by the cumulative tension of parts. 'Just as cells in their division form a phenomenon of another order, the organism, so on the other side of the dialectical leap from the shot, there is montage'.¹³ Indeed, Eisenstein inventories such conflicts within the shot – graphic direction, scales, volumes, masses, depths, and so on – which offer dialectical possibilities for the cineaste. At the next level, the tension within the shot 'explodes with increasing intensity in montage-conflict among the separate

36 shots'.¹⁴ Again, Eisenstein categorises: his typology of montage between shots emerges as perfectly isomorphic with his theory of mental process. At the final level, Eisenstein proposes an audio-visual dialectic, in which the quantitative addition of the sound track makes sound an independent, conflicting montage piece and permits a qualitative leap into a contrapuntal art. Thus commentators who minimise Eisenstein's debt to orthodox Marxism do him an injustice, for in his basic assumptions about art and his theory of hierarchic qualitative transformations, he is truly constructing 'a dialectic approach to film form'.

So thoroughly does Eisenstein strive to establish montage as the formal-dialectal principle of cinema that he is driven to account theoretically for every bit of perceptual material in the shot. The result is his widely celebrated and widely misunderstood typology of 'methods of montage'. Since this scheme has important consequences for Eisenstein's epistemology, it is worth examining briefly. (See diagram below.) The first type, metric montage (1), is concerned solely with external relations between shots and is independent of content; only 'the absolute lengths of the shot-pieces' is relevant. But the shot is an assortment of 'depictive' signs, each with various qualities: any given shot contains multiple stimuli. How can the film-maker calculate and control such an assortment of stimuli? One way is through rhythmic montage (2), which considers the relation of shot-length to content in general; Eisenstein's example is from the Odessa steps sequence, in which the off-beat of the cutting interacts with the overall pattern of descent. But the category 'content' is still too broad; Eisenstein splits it into the subsets 'dominants' and 'overtones'. Hence tonal montage (3), which considers relationships between shots' foregrounded component, the 'affective dominant'. 'Here montage is based on the characteristic *emotional sound* of the piece'.¹⁵ Eisenstein's example is the 'fog sequence' in *Potemkin*, wherein the cutting is dictated by the primary emotional thrust of each shot. He goes further to consider the possibility of a concerted play of dominants as 'major' and 'minors'. Subsidiary elements within each shot are absorbed into the next category, that of overtone montage (4), 'the collective calculation of all the piece's appeals'.¹⁶ Thus a sequence's form may be constructed upon the tensioned interplay among a line of related dominants and lines of overtones. In the religious procession of *Old and New*, for instance, the salient thrust is the pattern of religious fervour, but it is accompanied by lines of overtones (heat, brightness, prostration, shot-scale, etc) which qualify the dominant. True to montage's dialectical biases, Eisenstein insists that 'overtone montage in its first steps has to take a line in sharp *opposition* to the dominant'.¹⁷ If tonal montage is melodic, overtone is at once harmonic and polyphonic; or, in another figure, the shot becomes equal to the kabuki scene, in which a total set of stimuli interact upon parallel channels. Finally,

there is intellectual montage (5), which is a special case of either tonal or overtone montage: we now consider the conceptual relations among dominants and subsidiary stimuli. The *locus classicus* is the 'God and Country' sequence of *October*, which constitutes in its argument about the nature of the concept God 'a kind of filmic reasoning'.¹⁸ This is the base of the intellectual cinema of the future, and, like all the other types outlined, it is premised upon conflict among stimuli.

37



1. Metric Montage
2. Rhythmic Montage
3. Tonal Montage
4. Overtone Montage
5. Intellectual Montage

The last three types of montage, abundantly present in Eisenstein's own films, may be clarified by a compressed examination of their operation in a single system. *October* contains 'depictive' signs which are culturally conventionalised, but through the powers of montage to create a dense network of dialectical relations, Eisenstein contextually qualifies every conventional sign. For example, sensuous overtones alter coded cognitive dominants, as in the shots of Kerensky intercut with shots of a peacock and of a Napoleon statue and toy soldiers. For decades these sequences have been criticised as naive formulas, filmic rebus. But this is to read only the intellectual 'dominants' of the sequence: Kerensky, vain as a peacock, has Napoleonic dreams of power. The montage context supplies affective overtones: Kerensky's static pose is contrasted with the whirling peacock, and the bird's stiff movements (it is a *clockwork* peacock) announce the link between Kerensky and those mechanical artifacts that inhabit the Winter Palace. Similarly, Kerensky's dreams of power are refracted through the film-maker's consciousness, which renders them as alienated

38 and fetishised: Napoleon is a statue, the soldiers are toys. Most important, the affective overtones of inertia, artificiality, lifelessness, fetishisation, and alienation, established in this sequence and running through the film, are defined by dialectical opposition to the system of overtones clustered around the Bolshevik revolution. Consider by contrast the intellectual overtones of a predominantly affective sequence: while Kerensky lounges in the Czarina's bedroom, Lenin plots his return to Moscow. Kerensky's boot on a fancy pillow is juxtaposed to Lenin's hut, a teakettle boiling on the fire, and the contrast of useless elegance and dynamic function makes an ideological point. Finally, we may see how a conventional sign may be constantly transformed in function throughout the entire film. When Lenin arrives at the Finland Station, a low-angle shot shows him declaiming (the dominant) beneath a distant clock (the overtone). As the film continues, however, time becomes a more and more crucial factor, since the appeal to the Russian people is planned to synchronise with the taking of the Palace. (True to its title, *October's* form proposes a revolutionary redefinition not only of space but also of time.) At Smolny, Lenin looks at his watch; later, when the Bolsheviks attack the Winter Palace, a high-angle long shot shows a clock striking midnight and a crowd in the distance; the clock shifts from functioning as an affective overtone to functioning as an affective dominant. And at the moment the Palace surrenders, Eisenstein intercuts a cascade of clocks showing various times in various places around the world. The clock has become an intellectual, indeed ideological dominant: this hour enters history and will change the earth. Eisenstein would say that the film's repetitions condition our reflexes at emotional and intellectual levels by making each element grasped in a dialectical process. So rich is *October* that examples could be multiplied indefinitely, but for now it is enough to see that an overall matrix of oppositions (here the Kerensky/Lenin split given as statuary/vitality, artifacts/guns, silverware/banners, static time/dynamic time, etc) issues from the specific shot-juxtapositions which dialectically transform individual elements; interwoven relations among dominants and overtones are used to affective and cognitive ends.¹⁹

Such is the early Eisenstein's materialist aesthetic. How is it related to his view of human consciousness? We know that consciousness is physiological, and that elements in the art work (attractions or signs) are cues for basic response in the perceiver. But since Eisenstein is above all a theorist of form, he goes further to posit that consciousness is a formal process that integrates discrete physiological responses in three stages: sensation, affect, and cognition. 'The means of cognition – "through the living play of the passions" – apply specifically to the theatre.'²⁰ If consciousness consists of these three levels and if consciousness is also physiological, then sensation, emotion, and cognition are

different only in material degree: 'There is no difference in principle between the motion of a man rocking under the influence of an elementary metric montage and the intellectual process within it, for the intellectual process is the same agitation, but in the dominion of the higher nerve-centres'.²¹ Eisenstein is, moreover, insistent that art should engage the totality of human nervous response, so that art which is conceptually arid ('the sweet middle-class poison of Mary Pickford') is as incomplete as emotionless intellection ('an austere combination of symbols').²² The result is a theory which reduces to a physiological common denominator the perceiver's entire response: sensation, emotion, and cognition (especially overt ideological cognition) are seen as levels in a single material process.

These levels find their artistic embodiment in the formal devices of the work itself. Eisenstein's typologies of editing may all be factored into this triadic model of consciousness. In one essay, he isolates three kinds of dialectical editing – 'an artificially produced image of motion', 'emotional combinations', and 'liberation of the whole action from the definition of time and space' – which correspond in their effects to sensation, affect, and cognition.²³ More explicitly, in charting his methods of montage, Eisenstein specifies the physiological correspondences, setting as his goal the provocation of the spectator's body at every level. Metric montage is correlated with kinesthesia; rhythmic, tonal, and overtone montage are identified as levels of emotional response; and intellectual montage triggers a kinetic cognition, a 'lived thought'. Every type is reducible to a pattern of physiological response at some level. Hence film form, thanks to a behaviourist materialism, throws its trajectory into the spectator's brain/body. No longer, claims Eisenstein, should one say of an art work 'I hear' or 'I see' but rather 'I feel'.

Such a theory of mind, of course, has an ideological function. For Eisenstein's version of Marxism-Leninism, dialectical laws are *in* nature and correct thinking will reflect those laws, ie will itself be dialectical. For Eisenstein, the dialectic of nature is grasped abstractly in philosophy and concretely in art. Reactionary art, however, mystifies by smoothing over the dialectic in the world, sealing up the cracks. Thus revolutionary art becomes literally consciousness-expanding when its structure is isomorphic with the dialectic in nature and thereby induces our thinking the world dialectically. Hence Eisenstein's obsession with form. Since the world is a formal process of collision and transformation, the art work must be a scale model of process, of consciousness ceaselessly becoming and transcending itself through conflict. In this fusion of Pavlovian physiology and dialectical materialism we find the epistemological cornerstone of Eisenstein's early film theory. When this epistemology shifts after about 1930, we find deep fissures in Eisenstein's aesthetic.

'Even that old veteran Heraclitus observed that no man can bathe twice in the same river. Similarly, no aesthetic can flourish on one and the same set of principles at two different stages in its development'.²⁴ This, the beginning of Eisenstein's 1935 speech at the notorious Soviet Cinematograph conference, has usually been taken to signal his bowing to the Stalinist purge of formalism. But it is also, in a characteristically self-conscious gesture, the recognition of epistemological assumptions which radically differ from the materialism of his earlier theory. These assumptions surface in Eisenstein's work after 1935 in the guise of what he calls 'inner speech'.

'How fascinating it is,' writes Eisenstein in 1932, 'to listen to one's own train of thought, particularly in an excited state, in order to catch yourself, looking at and listening to your own mind. How you talk "to yourself", as distinct from "out of yourself"'. The syntax of inner speech as distinct from outer speech. The quivering inner words that correspond with the visual images.'²⁵

This passage recapitulates Eisenstein's new position, with the 'train of thought' figure announcing an associationist psychology, 'to yourself' suggesting a private language accessible by introspection, and the very concept of internal 'words' proposing the existence of mental entities which are no longer reducible to a physiological common denominator. Empiricist also is Eisenstein's account of how inner speech generates emotional, not logical concepts. Recall, Eisenstein suggests, how we think of the concept 'five pm'. We see the clock hands in a specific position again and again, and we associate with this configuration a host of attendant activities - 'tea, the end of the day's work, the beginning of rush hour on the subway, perhaps shops closing, or the peculiar late afternoon light'.²⁶ By training and habit, such associations somehow cohere into the concept 'five pm'. In other words, with repeated exposure to a phenomenon, the mind accumulates associations and inductively generalises concepts. (Compare Pavlov's mechanistic theory of circuits and 'marked-out' paths.) This is, of course, the classic empiricist position: 'impressions' are associated through what Hume called 'constant conjunction'. Eisenstein proposes, in a sense, behaviourism with its material basis stripped away, its publically observable data replaced by introspection, its physiological entities replaced by purely mental 'representations' and 'images'.

Eisenstein goes on to locate this empiricist epistemology in primitive thought. Inner speech is prelogical, 'sensuous' activity, 'the flow and sequence of thinking unformulated into the logical constructions in which altered, formulated thoughts are expressed'.²⁷ Yet inner speech has structural laws: synecdoche, decorum, multiple identity, and concreteness. Not only does Eisenstein argue, in a

blurry anticipation of Lévi-Strauss, that such structural laws are isomorphic with customs in primitive cultures. More important, just as the early theory saw the dialectic of nature and thought reproduced in art's formal principles, now Eisenstein makes the formal principles of art isomorphic with the process of 'inner speech'. 'The march of inner thinking [is] the basic law of construction of form and composition'.²⁸

This epistemological shift explains the relapse into Romanticism so marked in Eisenstein's later theorising. Since 'inner speech' is prelogical and sensuous, the early theory's project of stimulating abstract and ideological reasoning is abandoned; sensation and affect are now sufficient. If basic thinking utilises felt concepts, those mixtures of emotional associations we call 'five o'clock' or 'Forty-second Street' or 'the hour of fate', the schematic tropes of intellectual montage must be rejected. Now the spectator's reaction must be not thought but pathos, 'ecstasy'. More drastically, the very concept of montage is overhauled. Since the work of art must map the way we create felt concepts in life, montage's ability to render the dynamic flow of images makes it the sovereign formal principle. Similarly, Eisenstein's obsessive examination of the creative process stems from his new view of montage as isomorphic with inner speech. Most important, with Eisenstein's casting off of his dialectical epistemology, tension drops out of the concept of montage; now he stresses organicism. (Locke's empiricism led the early English romantics to a comparable position.) The parts of the art work will be arranged not to collide but to commingle; the goal is not friction but fusion, not analysis but synthesis. The dynamic art work will constitute a system of repetitions which by accreting associations generate in the viewer the very experience of building concepts in life. No wonder Eisenstein readily 'discovers' montage in art works by Leonardo, Zola, and Milton: all, he assumes, juxtapose elements to create an emergent master-feeling, a whole in the act of organically becoming. He even reads the organic model backwards into his own films ('Organic Unity and Pathos in the Composition of Potemkin') and Griffith's ('Dickens, Griffith, and the Film Today'). Ironically, an eighteenth-century theory of mind pushes Eisenstein from a modernist conception of form back to the organic model he had originally repudiated. From now on, montage is harmony and unity.

Such a Romantic aesthetic issues in Eisenstein's famous embrace of synesthesia or 'synchronisation of senses' in accordance with a new theory of the art work: the work as a polyphonic tissue of interwoven 'lines'. In film, montage within and between shots becomes the over-arching principle through which every line – acting, lighting, decor, composition, camera distance and angle – takes its place in an unfolding tapestry of sense-stimulation. Eisenstein's interest in kabuki had raised the possibility of organic transfer among sense-channels; now (and again the irony is striking)

42 Wagner becomes the model. When Eisenstein stages the *Valkyrie* in 1939-1940, he writes with a love that would have made the young Eisenstein contemptuous: 'I feel as though I had long been striving precisely towards this work. Wagner proved to be quite a natural step in my creative path. . . . What most attracted me in Wagner were his opinions on synthetic spectacle'.²⁹ The leap of channel of kabuki is now seen in Wagner's synesthetic art, as Eisenstein points out in noting that *Tristan and Isolde* transfers passion from the drama to the music. As a result of this interest, both Eisenstein's theory and his film-making seek to make montage contextually control the interlacing of every sense-mode and 'line' in the art work.

Consider, for example, the notion of 'vertical montage'. Instead of stressing the non-synchronised 'palpability' of the soundtrack for dialectical purposes, the later theory sees the soundtrack as another source of 'lines' which can structure the spectator's experience in a synchronised fashion. Eisenstein suggests a typology of audio-visual synchronisation that strikingly parallels his earlier schema of montage methods. The film-maker can: (1) Match shot-lengths to beats on the soundtrack; (2) Match the rhythms of shots' material to rhythms on the track; (3) Match the moving compositional dominant of the shots to the movement of the track; and (4) Match the colour overtones of the shots to the musical movement.³⁰ Needless to say, within the form of the entire film, a given relationship will be repeated sufficiently to systematise the viewer's associations. It is against the background of such a schema that we must read the notorious analysis of the battle on the ice in *Alexander Nevsky*. True to his synesthetic assumptions, Eisenstein proposes a correlation between the musical movement and the compositional dominant in the first twelve shots of the sequence. The analysis is fallacious not because he is wrong about how images and music *may* interrelate (the context cues us to scan these shots from left to right, as he says) but because the example is not apt: when there is no *moving* compositional dominant (all twelve shots are notably static) we cannot synchronise the musical tempo with the *rate* at which we scan. Despite the problems of the specific example, however, the theoretical move is clear: 'vertical montage' demands that every sense-element find its place in an organically unified context.

Or consider Eisenstein's views of how colour should be integrated into cinema. Dismissing the aesthetic validity of an *absolute* system of colour and meaning, he finds the key in the very possibility of such synchronisation in any given work. Again, the formal synchronisation is crucial, since form is isomorphic with the process of inner speech. For the artist, red does not in itself evoke a sensation of heat but the artist can create a context wherein red becomes a voice in the polyphony of the work, functioning in manifold relation to all other 'lines' of the work. 'The themes

expressed in colour leitmotifs can, through its colour score and with its own means, unfold an inner drama, weaving its own pattern in a contrapuntal whole'.³¹ Again, the purpose is organic unity: 'Consistency in a definite tone-colour key, running through the whole work, must be given by an imagery structure in strict harmony with the work's theme and idea'.³² It is no surprise, then, that at the close of his life Eisenstein was going still further to integrate stereoscopy and wide-screen ratios within the concept of montage. Cinema is seen as the new *Gesamtkunstwerk*: 'Men, music, light, landscape, colour, and motion brought into one integral whole by a single piercing emotion, by a single theme and idea – this is the aim of modern cinematography'.³³

Eisenstein's later films offer perhaps the richest illustrations of the concrete implications of his organic theory. Scrutiny of *Ivan the Terrible*, for instance, reveals that it is constructed upon a great number of leitmotifs: eyes, crosses, birds, cups, candles, supplicatory gestures, choir voices, musical motifs, and others. These become expressive of feeling by being knit into a dense texture of lines that parallel and intersect one another throughout the film. Each major episode ends with a culmination, a knotting, of several lines. At Anastasia's bier, for example, the motifs of candles, choirs, wall paintings, crosses, and supplicatory gestures fuse in a complex synthesis. Montage in the film thus has as its purpose the structuring of the flow of these lines (resulting in that incessant fragmentation of 'realistic' space which Noel Burch has pointed out).³⁴ A single sequence illustrates the way various lines reinforce a single theme through 'transfer' in a rich polyphonic montage. In the beginning of the sequence of Ivan's siege of Kazan, a low-angle shot of a towed cannon foregrounds the spokes of the cart wheel. In the course of the sequence, this ray-motif leaps from one channel to another, growing steadily more dynamic until it culminates in music, gesture, and language. The ray-motif passes, in turn, from costume (the sun-emblem on the officers' armour) to the landscape (the clouds projecting from Ivan on the hillside) to a weapon (the candle with its rays of fuses) to a small action (the fuses firing) to extended action (the irradiating explosions in the dynamited fortress) to natural sound (the noise of the explosions) to music (three trumpet blasts and rising non-diegetic music), all of which climaxes in Ivan standing before a cannon, spreading his arms, and shouting: 'Now I am truly Czar!'. Although this ray-motif is the dominant of the sequence, it also weaves its way through the entire film (notably in the raylike bearded icon and in the repeated power-gesture). Instead of the dialectical oppositions we find at every formal level of *October*, we have here a synthesis within which each element reinforces a skein of associations. *Ivan the Terrible* is the most complex result of the empiricist epistemology and organic aesthetic that constitute Eisenstein's later theory.

We are left, then, with not one but two Eisensteins. The earlier theorist grounds his system in physiology and dialectical materialism, the later in psychology and empiricism. This, I suggest, explains the contradictions within the entire theoretical *œuvre* – contradictions such as his 1923 denigration of Western theatre as 'synthetic' and his 1940 praise of 'synthetic spectacle', or his early insistence upon the artist as calculating engineer and his later adherence to Wagner's dictum that 'When you create – you do not explain'.³⁵ Moreover, the marked stylistic and formal differences between his silent and sound films, between the dialectical, epic 'intellectual cinema' and the synesthetic 'operas' of court intrigue, are in some measure traceable to a behaviourist epistemology on the one hand and a private-language epistemology on the other.

Some theoretical problems of the two positions are worth noting. The strict materialist position, in its reduction of mental processes to physical ones, depends not upon a necessary truth but upon a contingent one; research might show it to be so. Such research will encounter the difficulties which critics of behaviourism have long pointed out: the co-existence in time and space of a mental event with a physical phenomenon may not be falsifiable. Moreover, the totalitarian ideological assumptions of such materialism are more apparent to us now than to the Eisenstein of 1923. Finally, the aesthetic assumptions behind Eisenstein's notion of 'depictive signs' are fuzzy and contradictory. Even more problematic is his empiricist position, which in its classic form has been strongly attacked by Wittgenstein's demonstration of the solipsism inherent in the concepts of introspection and private languages. Introspection guarantees nothing (How do I know I pick out the same association each time? What would it be like for me to forget?) and 'inner speech' can't logically establish the existence of other minds (How can I justify claims about feelings in others?). Eisenstein's later theory leads to ironic results: an artist who wants to reproduce the reality of his thought processes in others adopts a theory of mind which can't account for thought in himself or others.

The task of this essay has been theoretical organisation and exposition, but how may we account historically for Eisenstein's post-1930 break with dialectical and physiological materialism? In part, two of his theory's especially unstable and unclarified concepts made the shift smoother. First is the contradictory notion of the monistic ensemble. The early theory suggests that when each element retains its individuality (as in kabuki), the possibility is open for friction and conflict; but the conflict-side of the monistic ensemble is never developed and Eisenstein becomes instead fascinated with synesthetic correspondences: 'Whatever

notes I can't take with my voice, I'll show with my hands!'. Secondly, Eisenstein's itemised methods of montage are not dialectical *per se* and he makes overtone montage particularly biased towards organic fusion: although he claims that overtone montage must be in opposition to the dominant, all of his examples from *Old and New*, as he admits, illustrate "'synthetic" combinations".³⁶ Because of such organic biases present in the early theory, the monistic ensemble and the synthesis of tonal and overtone montage find their ultimate fruition not in the silent films but in *Alexander Nevsky* and *Ivan the Terrible*.

More broadly, Eisenstein's epistemological shift rehearses changes in Soviet philosophy of the time. His early theory marks the confluence of those elements of Constructivism, Formalist theory, and Pavlovian behaviourism that ran through Soviet thought in the 1920's. The philosophical school of mechanistic materialism of the 1920's, which took Pavlov as its figurehead, also probably had some impact on Eisenstein's thinking. But by 1929, power in the philosophical academy had been won by Deborin and his followers, who stressed a Hegelian-idealist dialectic. And in 1931, the January 25 decree of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party abolished all dispute on the matter and asserted 'the impossibility of reducing phenomena of higher order to those of lower order (eg, of life to physico-mechanical laws)'.³⁷ Other factors pushed Soviet thinking toward a more 'organic' position, notably the 1925 publication of Engels' *Dialectics of Nature*. Finally, Eisenstein's later notion of 'inner speech' also owes something to the linguist Lev Vygotsky, whose seminal work on primitive and childhood language, *Thought and Language*, was published in 1934 (just before Eisenstein's January 1935 speech on 'Film Form: New Problems'). We can hypothesise then, that Eisenstein's troubles with the Stalinist film industry were only one impetus for his theoretical shift, and that the direction and nature of that shift were formed in part by broader changes in Soviet ideology.

This essay has tentatively outlined two conceptual structures which account for Eisenstein's theoretical practice. Much more needs to be done to relate his theories not only to his film work but also to other theorists and film-makers. He remains, to my mind, the subtlest theorist of *context* whom the cinema has yet seen, and his two conceptions of montage remain, in their broadest compass, powerful formal constructs. We need to grasp the complexity and range and muddles of his thought in more depth before we can claim to have surpassed it.

Abbreviations in citations refer to the following editions of works by Sergei Eisenstein: FF: *Film Form*, edited and translated by Jay Leyda (New York: World, 1957); FS: *The Film Sense*, edited and translated by Jay Leyda (New York: World, 1957); FE: *Film Essays*, edited and translated by Jay Leyda (New York: Praeger, 1970); NFD: *Notes of a Film Director* (New York: Dover, 1970).

1. S M Eisenstein, 'Sur la question d'une approche matérialiste de la forme', *Cahiers du Cinéma* no 220-221 (May-June, 1970), p 35.
2. Sergei Eisenstein, 'Montage of Attractions', translated by Daniel Gerould, *The Drama Review* XVIII, 1 (March, 1974), p 78.
3. NFD, p 17.
4. Eisenstein, 'Montage of Attractions', p 78.
5. FF, p 20.
6. *Ibid*, p 23.
7. *Ibid*, p 21.
8. Eisenstein, 'Montage of Attractions', p 78.
9. Eisenstein, 'Sur la question d'une approche matérialiste de la forme', *Cahiers du Cinéma* no 220-221 (May-June, 1970), p 34.
10. FF, p 39.
11. *Ibid*, p 46.
12. Frederick Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*, quoted in Howard Selsam and Harry Martel, eds., *Reader in Marxist Philosophy* (New York: International Publishers, 1963), p 124.
13. FF, p 37.
14. *Ibid*, p 53.
15. *Ibid*, p 75.
16. *Ibid*, p 78.
17. *Ibid*, p 68.
18. *Ibid*, p 62.
19. Indeed, at a deeper level, *October's* formal development enacts the overthrow of one sign system by another, the abstract and alienated relationships and static time of the provisional government being replaced by the functional, personalised relationships and dynamic time of the bolshevik revolution.
20. Eisenstein, 'Montage of Attractions', p 78.
21. FF, p 82.
22. FE, p 18; FF, p 31.
23. See FF, pp 55-63.
24. *Ibid*, p 122.
25. *Ibid*, p 105.
26. *Ibid*, pp 13-14.
27. *Ibid*, p 130.
28. *Ibid*, p 147.
29. FE, p 85.
30. FS, pp 82-84.
31. *Ibid*, p 128.
32. *Ibid*, p 153.
33. FE, p 85.
34. See Noel Burch, *Theory of Film Practice* (New York: Praeger, 1973), pp 38-39.
35. FS, p 216.
36. FF, p 68.
37. Quoted in Gustav A Wetter, *Dialectical Materialism* (New York: Praeger, 1958), p 176.

Ronald Levaco

It was from the German aesthete Broder Christiansen's *Philosophie der Kunst* (1909) that the Russian Formalists, a group of which Boris Eikhenbaum was a principal member, derived the indispensable concept of the *Differenzqualität*, by means of which Christiansen observed significant qualities in artistic discourse to originate in a divergence from the norm. And it was this principle of differentiation (scarcely a novel epistemological procedure, motivating, for instance, the organisation of data by medieval students of anatomy) that led the Formalists not only to the establishment of a general theory of literary science but also to the particular development of Shklovsky's invaluable *priëm ostranenie* – the device of 'making something strange' – that Shklovsky isolated as the motor force in art. Indeed, Shklovsky's richest contribution, in *The Knight's Move* (1923), was of a theory of literature as a complex system of the production of such stylistic devices, which motivates the narrative onward by 'estranging' the reader through the use of uncommon linguistic expressions and 'unexpected' structurings of 'familiar' elements. By means of this procedure Shklovsky was able to accomplish a five-phase advance toward a scientific analysis of narrative art: (a) the isolation and definition of the literary object of study as a text differentiable from 'ordinary discourse' (speech); (b) a liberation of art from the overdetermination of naturalist/realist 'depiction'; (c) a strong and undeflectable assault on impressionist criticism that replaced the interpretation of art by the analysis of the rules of its discourse (production); (d) a decentring of the symbiotic, twin canonical logos of 'authorship' and the 'masterpiece'; and (e) a proposal for a non-static analysis of the artwork, as an object, a text reconceived as a dynamic structure of significations, the meaning of which lies in a dialectical conjuncture between the static text and an evolving, dynamic field of cultural response. It is in the context of this rigorous Formalist method that 'Problems of Film Stylistics', a chapter on film style by one of Shklovsky's colleagues, Boris Eikhenbaum, from the Formalist collection *Poetika Kino* (Moscow-Leningrad 1927), a chapter translated in *Screen* v 15 n 3, will be discussed. For Eikhenbaum shares the aspiration of Shklovsky's deconstruction of the mythos of art – to make it perceptually feasible and conceptually necessary to isolate literary from ordinary discourse and, analogously, film from everyday life, as a priority to the scientific analysis of both media and an elevation of the epistemological awareness of artists and auditors alike.

From his opening paragraph Eikhenbaum carefully if casually sets

48 the boundaries for his discussion of the problems of film stylistics. These can be most fully understood in terms not only of the *Differenzqualität* and Shklovsky's *priëm ostranenie* (often translated as *defamiliarisation* or *estrangement*) – but also in the light of Eikhenbaum's Marxist sensitivity to the historical evolution of the signification of any artistic discourse or text. The consequences of the October Revolution alone would have made it impossible for him to see the process of signification as static. Therefore, while the premises contained in Eikhenbaum's introductory paragraph and those succeeding are largely implicit, it is crucial to their reading to separate them from the bourgeois assumptions of pre-Revolutionary art and art criticism (eg art as a supra-discourse, alienated from, superior to, and contaminated by common, societal concerns). From this Marxist viewpoint what is important is that while the text of any artwork may appear patently static, it must be understood that its meaning is dialectical – a reciprocal expression of society and culture, situated and understood by auditors at a particular moment in history – and that the events of history and the advances of ideology can and do transform the signification of the artwork for any human subject situated in history. Thus, the arts, as Eikhenbaum puts it, do not have a natural existence – a point worth considering at two levels: first, because all art – however naturalistic, realistic, or mimetic – is situated in and derives its authority from men's responses to its forms of expression (which, as will be seen, are embodied in its stylistic *conventions*), of signification; and second, because in the very production of art human consciousness is ineluctably inscribed in conditions of change. Thus, to use a rather obvious example from film history, Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* has already undergone a substantial transformation of its significations (one might say the racist signs are 'leaking' Griffith's meanings) in the context of the struggle for racial equality, especially by blacks, within the last few decades, and the inevitable transformation of the knowledge of oppression, colonialism, and racism these changes have brought. Likewise and perhaps somewhat less obviously, Lang's once 'prophetic' *Metropolis* will also be read as a different text today (particularly in the light of the Watergate 'model' of contemporary megagovernment). Therefore, however 'universal' and 'changeless' any artwork might appear to be, Eikhenbaum is at pains to remind the reader at the outset that such is not the case – that rather, the arts are both time-bound and culture-specific as sets of signifiers (these conceptions are inherent in Saussure's synchrony/diachrony dialectic), that is, the signifying structures of artistic expression differentiate and evolve over time and from culture to culture, as do its units of expression. However, these elements of signification invariably maintain temporally functional attributes (ie meaning is functional) and relationships to everyday life and reality, which ensure their survival through

time.

Because his is a departure from traditional approaches, one can thus read Eikhenbaum most effectively with the often tautological biases of non-revolutionary or bourgeois conceptions of art in mind. Chief among these are the biases that art – especially ‘masterpiece’ art – is ‘timeless’; that only the ‘masterpieces’ (by definition usually artworks that are circularly described as ‘timeless’ and ‘great’) are worthy of study; that ‘great’ artworks survive time purely by chance and perennial public endorsements of their excellence, not by means of ideological expressions tacitly or explicitly supporting the ruling or dominant political order; that ‘great’ artworks are revered because of their inherent ‘greatness’, the ‘common’ opinions of the uninitiated to the contrary; that ‘great’ art always transcends, or exists apart from, the less stable influences and vicissitudes of politics and ideology; that artistic ‘masterpieces’ are usually produced by exceptional ‘geniuses’ who, because their talents are ‘prophetic’ and unique, manage to illuminate for less-gifted members of humanity some region of life they dimly share; that the production of art and its consumption are fragile, sublime, and rarified activities, which, precisely because they are so rarified place the artist (and his patrons) apart from and ‘above’ the ordinary populace; that the potentiality of an artwork to be ‘great’ is vitiated, jeopardised, or corrupted by vulgar materialist motives; that the aspiration of art is ‘spiritual’, ‘visionary’, ‘magical’, ‘inspirational’, and ‘mystifying’; that the artist exists in an inevitable condition of uncommonness, alienation, and, because his vision is often prophetic and his sensibility fragile, an emotional precariousness in society; that art and artists are somehow often ‘irrational’ or ‘non-rational’; that all art, but especially ‘great’ art, must be revered and preserved against the ravages of time or the barbarity of insensitive treatment; that ‘original’ pieces of ‘great’ art are inherently more valuable than ‘copies’ or ‘imitations’; and finally, that all art is (paradoxically) measurable in ‘value’ both aesthetically and materially in terms of qualities usually termed ‘uniqueness’ and ‘originality’ (the paradox being a curious confusion of the aesthetic and material objects notable in bourgeois societies, in which ‘great art’ is spoken of as spirit but measured in worth as matter).

Hence, Eikhenbaum’s discussion of film style itself becomes a figure to be perceived as a divergence from a ‘norm’, namely, the background of bourgeois conceptions of art; and his tracing of the historical development of cinema from its origins in photography serves as a means of differentiating film from photography, just as Shklovsky differentiates poetic from ordinary discourse. However embryonic, this characteristically Formalist approach gives Eikhenbaum a more rigorous, materialist means of defining what cinema is, as distinct from what it is not. Thus film, for Eikhenbaum,

50 is *not* nature, however naturalistic it may appear to be; nor is it photography, although it shares with photography the capacity for the faithful reproduction of objects photographed and even derives from photography its illusion of movement. As Eikhenbaum further proceeds with his delimitations: film is not merely 'scenic' pictures; nor is film reliant on photogeny in the way photography is, Delluc to the contrary. Indeed, Eikhenbaum must give the question of photogeny and Delluc's treatise short shrift, since his particular goal lies in the identification and demystification of cinematic style, while a discussion of photogeny would take him into a consideration of how culture endows the cinematic object with aura, charisma, or immanence. Moreover, Eikhenbaum's discussions of film continuity, temporal construction, the motivation of film transitions, and, indeed, the construction of the film phrase itself – in Section VII – displace the earlier concern with photogeny. Rather, Eikhenbaum's caveat here is especially evident when he approaches the question of photogeny as a function of film form, rather than, as Delluc proposes, an inherent aspect of the film object. And in this regard, clearly, the work of the Kuleshov Workshop is crucial. The well-known Kuleshov experiments in 'creative geography' ('artificial landscape') and the 'Mozzhukhin effect' are at the centre of what Eikhenbaum terms the 'distinction between the material and the way it was used'.

Thus, after several pages of argumentation directed at what film is *not*, a brief summary to establish Eikhenbaum's direction toward a definition of what film is might be useful. First, from Shklovsky Eikhenbaum derives the principle that any art can be best defined through its *differentiation* from everyday life. Thus, for Eikhenbaum, art either uses aspects of everyday life 'left over' from or unused within it, for which no 'practical' application exists; or art transforms the material of everyday life by 'unexpected structurations', 'unexpected interpretations', or 'new arrangements' of that material. As a process that transforms material for greater cultural utility, art thus equates with industry. Therefore, by definition, even the most seemingly naturalistic art – including cinema – either utilises material already 'deformed' in everyday life or achieves that deformation of material through a 'new arrangement' of its properties. For Shklovsky, if this were not the case, the very existence of artistic expression (the capacity of its sign structures to convey meaning) would dissolve, since the artistic material is created and given semantic form by a process of its differentiation from that material in nature that is *not* art. In the case of literature, this method of analysis involves a differentiation of poetic discourse from ordinary discourse; in the case of the pictorial arts, such as cinema, this method implies a differentiation of the film either from the material of everyday life or from media of expression antecedent to the cinema.

Second, from Kuleshov Eikhenbaum gains the distinction between

the material of cinema and its construction. Indeed, by 1924, Kuleshov had polemically and provocatively challenged naturalistic theories of cinema, proclaiming the true material of cinema to be the celluloid itself – a material the precise meaning of which could be controlled through the ordering and assembling of its shots – in short, through the structuration of its material – or what the Russians termed montage. It is this ordering of a material that Eikhenbaum analyses as ‘those energies of the human organism which are excluded from everyday life’, an analysis that is best read as Eikhenbaum’s use of Shklovsky’s and Kuleshov’s theories of film form. By contrast, photogeny, for Eikhenbaum, is not so much an inherently fascinating ‘essence’ of objects, but rather a seeing of the object anew by means of its particular presentation on the screen – in short, by means of what Shklovsky termed its defamiliarisation through artistic structuring. Only used in this way, as a function of structuration, not as an inherent immanence but as ‘expressivity’, Eikhenbaum tells us, does photogeny turn into cinematic ‘language’ – which forms the basis of film stylistics.

II

If we are able to read Eikhenbaum’s work contextually, the discussion of film style he proposes here is methodologically modest but conceptually complex; to create a theory of film stylistics that could differentiate the principal units of expression of the medium; to describe what Barthes has called film’s ‘sovereign motor principle’, the syncretisation of the units of ‘smallest difference’ within its complex structure; to derive film structure in terms of the stylistic options available to the film maker; to relieve the cinema of its mere mechanical genesis and its non-narrative fraternity with still photography; and, finally, to persuade the film analyst of the utility and validity of the Formalist method he proposes. Because they are stated elsewhere (See especially Eikhenbaum, ‘The Theory of the Formal Method’ in Lee T Lemon and Marion J Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, University of Nebraska Press, 1965, pp 130 ff) but not here, several factors of Eikhenbaum’s analysis are held implicit and are worth delineating. First, because it is Eikhenbaum’s proclivity to consider cinema as a language system and because his analysis absorbs the Saussurian synchronic/diachronic and syntagmatic/paradigmatic conceptions of the temporal, sequential distribution of language forms, Eikhenbaum reminds the reader that as artistic discourse is dynamic, so must the analysis of cinema, the filmic material and its processes of meaning, be mediated by history. Second, because Eikhenbaum is interested in art as discourse rather than as sublime expression, his discussion of film style decentres authorship, rejects aestheticism, and places film in the context of its industrial and socio-economic conditions of production.¹ Third, because he under-

52 stands the material of art to be a formal element, Eikhenbaum implies that the material of film does not lie beyond the limits of its form (*ibid*, p 130). Fourth, because his work developed more rigorously in opposition to Potebnaya's flabbier, symbolist theory of art as 'thinking in images', Eikhenbaum's discussion of film style ignores the traditional, critical interpretation and evaluation of film 'content', in favour of the analysis of the *arrangement* of images, understood as content, in which form is seen 'no longer as an envelope, but as a complete thing, something concrete, dynamic, self-contained, and without correlative of any kind' (*ibid*, p 112). Sixth, because he was intent on showing 'that the perception of form results from special artistic techniques that force the (viewer) to experience the form', Eikhenbaum seeks to identify the 'devices' in cinema analogous to literary tropes, 'parallelism, comparison, repetition, symmetry, hyperbole, etc' as a general system of poetic devices (*ibid*, p 114). Seventh, because he was intrigued by play theories of art, Eikhenbaum returns again and again to the structuration of cinematic syntagma as a rearrangement of 'natural' order and thus to montage as the basis of film stylistics – a kind of wresting from nature (and from chance) of the cinematic material, so that in the process of the association of its units, its formal syncretisation and construction, the work can be endowed (as Barthes has suggested) almost demiurgically with meaning. And finally, eighth, because he anticipates the structuralist activity of creating a simulacrum to the artwork, in place of a personal, impressionistic critical commentary, Eikhenbaum's discussion of film style implies not only the meaning, but the social 'cost' to man and woman of the fabrication of meaning through technique in the development of cinematic style.

However tempting, it is not the intent of this brief exposition of Eikhenbaum's chapter on film stylistics to take up each of its proposed implications separately; rather, it is hoped that their density and richness will provoke the interested reader to pursue further the correspondences suggested here. The question of what stylistics are, however, remains unprobed and more imminent.

In the Conference on Style held in 1958, between New Critics, linguists, aestheticians, and structuralists (See Thomas Sebeok, ed, *Style in Language*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass 1960), perhaps the most provocative and cogent definition of style in literature was Bernard Bloch's: 'The style of a discourse is the message carried by the frequency-distributions and transitional probabilities of its linguistic features, *especially as they differ from those of the same features in the language as a whole.*' (Italics mine.) Clearly, and consistent with Eikhenbaum's conclusions, the proposition here is that while linguistics is concerned with the description of a code, stylistics is concerned with the *differences* among messages generated in accordance with the rules of that code (*ibid*, p 87). However, an interesting caveat to Bloch's definition is added by

both Dell Hymes and Alfred Kroeber. Style, for Hymes, may not be a deviation from but rather an achievement of a norm (*ibid*, p 109). And Kroeber adds: 'A style is a strand in a culture or civilisation: a coherent, self-consistent way of expressing behaviour or performing certain kinds of acts. It is also a selective way: there must be alternative choices, though actually they may never be selected.'²

These definitions of style, so consistent with Eikhenbaum's method of address, are seminal, since they too absorb the concept of differentiation and, perhaps more significantly, contain analytical distinctions (especially in the case of Kroeber) that are to be found in Saussure's *langue/parole* dialectic and the syntagmatic/paradigmatic analyses of Barthes and Metz.³ It is in *this* critical or analytical discourse that Eikhenbaum's theory of film style is inscribed. For example, nowhere in this chapter on film style does Eikhenbaum raise the questions of beauty, sublimity, or masterpieces in the cinema, except tangentially (eg in the case of the example of *The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari*). Instead, his focus here is on the rules of cinematic discourse, the puzzle of photogeny, the emergence of cinematic inner speech, and the evolution of montage as film style. And while the work of the Formalists in cinema still lacked the kind of methodological refinements that made it possible for later film scientists to pursue syntagmatic analyses in the cinema, as Metz has done, it seems evident that what Eikhenbaum was concerned with in his discussion of film style was the very process of structuration in film. That is, if the narrative work is a meaningful ordering of choices wrested from chance, as Barthes posits, then style in film is the interplay (dialectical reciprocation) between *regularity* and *recurrence* of perceptible features of sight and sound (ie selection→elaboration→redundancy→predictability→recognition→meaning), a process related to the one Eikhenbaum terms *inner speech*, to which we will come in a moment; and in his subsequent brief discussion of metaphor, what he terms 'verbal baggage'. The battle against chance, however, from Barthes's viewpoint is not necessarily compatible with the humanist conception of the artist as a visionary (eg Blake and Rimbaud in literature – Cocteau or Deren in cinema), heroically plotting lonely odysseys through an uncharted and perhaps unchartable psychic territory. Rather, in this structuralist view, the artist is one bricoleur among many – wresting his artistic expression from chance – but in reliance on complex *but analysable* systems of expression that anteceded his existence and his art and constrain it potentially in the direction of parsimony. 'Like the ancient soothsayer, he *speaks* the locus of meaning,' Barthes notes, 'but does not name it.'⁴ This capacity to know without naming is what Eikhenbaum calls the need for 'divination' in the arts. It is achieved systematically, however, and in distinct stages: first, by *differentiating* the units of the structure of expression from one

54 another; second, by *syncretising*, or combining and agglutinating these into groupings, through their dialectical dynamic regulator of *affinity* and *dissimilarity*; and third and finally, by relying on and drawing from a reservoir of such patterns of expression. Thus, within this model of expression, style can be termed the application of a *governing or regulating principle* – as well as what becomes a *criterion* in criticism – or what Jakobson has called *the dominant*.⁵ For Jakobson, *the dominant* in the artistic process of expression is the procedure in artistic expression by means of which any single unit (eg phoneme, mytheme, kineme, etc) or *syncretisation* of units (eg a syntagm) is selected in *preference to* or *over* the universe of such units. Style in cinema, then, is a set of such decisions by means of which I select or write the scenario; decide the objects and actors at which to point my camera; select the lens; design the lighting, costumes, make-up, decor (or accept those that are given); select film stock, f stop, shot metrage, angle, framing, and composition; design or accept the *mise-en-scène*; select, direct or accept actors; select the opticals, printing, and effects; select the sounds and decide their relationships to the images; and edit, etc, etc.

It is in these choices (and etceteras) and the processes of their differentiation and syncretisation, regulated by the dominant, that the aesthetic decisions we term stylistic take place. It is in the text alone that the process of the deconstruction (or deformation) and reconstruction of the cinematic material – the play of style – inscribes itself. And it is solely in the text where its analysis is to be found.

III

What remains for Eikhenbaum to accomplish is the analysis of how film sequences or syntagma are created and how they are understood. To accomplish this stage, Eikhenbaum again relies on the circumscription of the cinematic discourse by differentiating it, in this case, from verbal discourse. Here, the cinematic dominant of '*visible movement in details*' is foregrounded by Eikhenbaum against the background of what he terms the residual theatrical (and because verbal, hence also literary) dominant of '*the audible word*' (Eikhenbaum's italics), a verbal discourse the precedent patterns of which are already part of the viewer-reader's culture. Thus, the film viewer, earlier proposed as perceiving the dynamic cinematic image as a 'deformation' of nature, everyday life, and still photography, is now considered as cognising cinematic syntagma in a process of *signification contrasted* to the verbal (reading) process. For while reading the word demands comprehension through lexical and syntactic foreknowledge, reading the cinematic image demands what Eikhenbaum terms '*divination*', which might seem a process of apodictic knowledge, reliant on the iconic nature

of the cinematic sign and the structuration of the everyday world learned in language acquisition and conceptual development. Because one may not have to learn cinematic discourse lexically and syntactically, as one must learn verbal discourse, Eikhenbaum proposes that film culture stands in (dialectical) 'opposition' to verbal culture. But he is imperatively cautious to add that one discourse never *replaces* another in human consciousness; rather, for Eikhenbaum, the filmic discourse is understood – indeed, its existence is made possible as a system of signification – against a background of verbal discourse, and the structure of verbal discourse, at a level termed 'internal speech' (also referred to hereafter as inner speech). For it is the possession of speech, Eikhenbaum contends, that creates the paradigmatic/syntagmatic dominanta that in turn make possible the meaningful distributions both of the words and mimicry of theatrical narration – and those of cinematic montage, though by means of entirely different processes.

The film viewer, whom Eikhenbaum describes as having to 'perform the complex mental labour of coupling the frames (construction of film-phrases and film periods), a form of labour practically non-existent in everyday life (and in the theatre) where the word has the monopoly of expression . . . must continually form a chain of film-phrases, or else he will not understand anything.' But for Eikhenbaum the stylistic structuration of cinematic syntagma – sequences comprised of shots – requires a discursive or narrative model, a conceptual scaffolding, and a regulating principle, to ensure that they can be read – that the camera direction, the cuts, and the sequential distribution can convey, over the ellipses, transitions, and space abrogations and segmentations, what Eikhenbaum terms 'comprehension and meaning'. For this understanding, the concept of internal or inner speech is indispensable to Eikhenbaum's analysis.

Inner speech is a developmental stage in the theory of language acquisition, overlooked in the early Piaget but elaborated from his work by Lev Vygotsky, the Soviet psychologist and linguist, whose work has retained its significance in the decades from its elaboration in the 1920's to the present (See *Thought and Language*, MIT, Cambridge, Mass 1962). Piaget's early experiments in the 1920's, the so-called 'battle for consciousness', led him to divide the development of the child's acquisition of language into two phases: the egocentric and the socialised. For Piaget, although these two levels are not purely temporal phases but rather over-lapping sets of developmental activity, the child is seen to develop through egocentric to socialised speech as a function of normal life development and language acquisition. Having first learned a system of signs corresponding to perceived objects and phenomena, the child's speech is preponderantly egocentric in function (audible speech not directed to specific others and unreliant on information exchange), similar to a monologue in a play, until the age of six

56 or seven, when the ratio of egocentric speech changes to one favouring social speech (audible speech directed to others and reliant on information exchange). In the process of this vital transition, according to Piaget, many of the child's thoughts come to remain unexpressed precisely because they are egocentric – ie incommunicable, since to convey them to others during the egocentric phase would be to adopt or to recognise the other's viewpoint, a procedure insufficiently manifested in the child until the sixth or seventh year and the acquisition of social speech. It is in answer to the puzzling question: What happens to the manifest phenomena of egocentric speech when they appear to be replaced by the directed, logical, and communicative discourse of social speech? that Vygotsky pursued the investigations leading to the formulation of the term *inner speech*.

For Piaget it is the child's inherent desire to communicate, to play, and to work with others that causes egocentric speech to subside and to be behaviourally replaced with social speech. Initially, Piaget contends, all children are born in the state of autism, a pre-linguistic condition of what is termed 'undirected thought', and one which precedes egocentrism and occupies an intermediate position, genetically, structurally, and functionally, between purely autistic and directed thought (see *ibid*, pp 10-11). While directed thought is conscious, intelligent, and adapted to reality, striving to influence it, autistic thought is subconscious – ie its goals and problems are not present in consciousness and it is not adapted to external reality, but rather creates for itself a reality of imagination and dreams. Moreover, autistic thought tends to gratify wishes, to operate primarily in images, and to evoke the feelings that guide it by means of symbols and myths. By contrast, directed thought is social, increasingly influenced by the laws of experience and logic, and is mediated by egocentric thinking and speech, which operate as a genetic link between autism and the directed functions and structures of social speech and thinking (see *ibid*, p 13). Clearly, the descriptions of many of these thought and language processes now begin to resemble Eikhenbaum's analysis and descriptions of film expression.

Moreover, and in still closer analogy to Eikhenbaum's discussion is the following: of all the characteristics that pervade the child's egocentric thinking and speech until the social age begins at seven or eight, Piaget unequivocally terms *syncretism* to be the most indispensable and characteristic. After seven or eight, the child's syncretistic egocentric thought and speech do not vanish, according to Vygotsky, nor are they entirely replaced by social speech. Rather, while they disappear from the normal child's behaviour these egocentric features remain crystallised in the more abstract area of purely verbal thought (*ibid*, p 14). In fact, the social influences to which adults subject the child are not, as Piaget says, simply 'imprinted on him as on a photographic plate. They are

" assimilated ", that is to say, *deformed* (italics mine) by the living being subjected to them and become implanted in his own substance' (*cit ibid*, p 14). Clearly, then, the character and structuration of inner speech can be seen to be the internal scaffolding, the elliptical, syncretic, imagistic, symbolic, and mythic inner discourse that flows as thought and is homologous to film structure.

Vygotsky's contribution to and critique of Piaget's theory of language acquisition and thought structuration are thus especially apposite in light of the formation of inner or internal speech, which Vygotsky concludes from his experiments to be egocentric speech turned inward – thus answering the earlier question of what happens to it when undirected egocentric speech vanishes from the behaviour of social speech (*ibid*, p 46). More flexible, imagistic mythic, syncretistic, and non-logical than conventional, social speech and language, Vygotsky's conception of inner speech nonetheless displays the use of signs and the functional interaction of speech (*parole*) and language (*langue*) that makes the manifestation of inner speech possible as thought and gives its descriptions authority for us.

However, what is most vital is that Vygotsky's particular description of the theory of inner speech makes inner speech directly relevant to Eikhenbaum's analysis of film style at two levels. First, aspects of inner speech that Vygotsky is able to describe share significant linguistic features with Eikhenbaum's descriptions of film style. These features are particularly made clear by contrast with oral speech, for although oral speech precedes the formation of inner speech, and although written speech 'presupposes (the) existence of inner speech (eg the act of writing implies a translation from inner speech)' (*ibid*, p 99), Vygotsky asserts that 'the syntax of inner speech is the exact opposite of the syntax of written speech, with oral speech standing in the middle' (*ibid*, p 99). Indeed, Vygotsky's description of inner speech as syncretic, condensed, and predicative (action based), not only bears directly on Eikhenbaum's analysis of cinema, but presages the recent invaluable contributions to contemporary film science of the *Cinéthique* and *Cahiers* groups of the late 1960's, as well as their adherents who apply Althusserian and Lacanian analysis to cinema.⁶ Clearly, the early primitive analogues of *letter* and *frame*, *word* and *shot*, and *sentence* and *sequence*, indulged in by Kuleshov among others, have proven both unproductive and a metaphoric confusion in the development of a film science striving to identify the rules of cinematic discourse. By contrast, in the light of the Lacanian theory of the constitution of the Imaginary through the 'specularity' of the perceiving subject, the 'suture' system of montage described by Oudart, and the puzzling human ascription of unity to any succession of 'matching' shots that seem, rather, a fragmentation of the space/time continuum, the Eikhenbaumian analysis of the film phrase as an ideological deconstruction and his concept of the

58 'accentual nucleus' (a term resembling Jakobson's 'dominant') are commonly reliant on a conception of cinema as a medium 'artificially-created, conventional, and . . . derivative . . . which comes into being as a result of turning nature into material.' Unfortunately, no more than a suggestion can be made here of the applicability of Eikhenbaum's stylistic analysis to the interesting work at present being carried on in the analysis of glances in the cinema, the convention of the shot-reverse-shot, for example, and the 'effect of reality' (*effet-de-reel*). But what is evident is that Eikhenbaum's stylistic analysis of film is directly compatible with contemporary film science's attempt at a systematic integration of historical materialism, structuralism, and the theory of the unconscious, while neither Kuleshov's, Pudovkin's, nor even Eisenstein's more stochastic analyses can make such claims. (For the moment, one must suspend judgment on Vertov's theory of intervals, since it remains as yet textually incomplete and theoretically disunified, even in Russian.) Indeed, while Eikhenbaum asks for a systematic investigation of the structuration of what may be termed the 'internal scaffolding' that supports the possibility of continuity and signification in cinematic syntagma and can stabilise what he terms the inherent cinematic 'deformation' of 'natural material', his distinguished cinéaste colleagues, Kuleshov, Pudovkin, and Eisenstein, poeticised the use of the cinematic grotesque in their writings without the theoretical rigour that a linguistic, structuralist, or semiological approach would have afforded. Rather, perplexed yet beguiled by the eclecticism, transparency, and aura of the cinematic experience, pre-structuralist studies of cinema focused on the naive text and its antecedent narrative forms and by-passed the scientific, materialist analysis of film as a labour object subscribing to particular transformational rules of discourse as a fabricated commodity.

Notes

1. See the discussion of Eikhenbaum's 'Literature and Literary Mores' (1927) in Victor Erlich, *Russian Formalism: History-Doctrine*, Mouton, The Hague 1955, pp 102-8.
2. A L Kroeber, *Style and Civilization*, Cornell UP, Ithaca 1957, p 150.
3. See Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, McGraw-Hill, New York 1974, pp 31-92; Roland Barthes, *Elements of Semiology*, Jonathan Cape, London 1970, pp 9-34; and Christian Metz, *Film Language*, OUP, London 1974, pp 31-92.
4. Roland Barthes, 'The Structuralist Activity', in *Critical Essays*, trans Richard Howard, North Western UP, Evanston, Illinois, 1972.
5. Roman Jakobson, 'The Dominant,' in L Matejka and K Pomorska, eds, *Readings in Russian Poetics, Formalist and Structuralist Views*, MIT, Cambridge Mass 1971, pp 82-90.
6. See especially Daniel Dayan, 'The Tutor Code of Classical Cinema,' *Film Quarterly*, Fall 1974, pp 22-31.

Paul Willemen

I

'Perception and understanding of a motion picture is inextricably bound up with the development of internal speech, which makes the connection between separate shots. Outside this process, only the trans-sense elements of film can be perceived.'

'Those who defend cinema from the imitation of literature often forget that though the audible word is eliminated from film, thought, ie, internal speech is nevertheless present. The study of the particularities of this film-speech is one of the most important problems in cinematic theory.'

These two quotes from Eikhenbaum's essay 'Problems of Film Stylistics', first published in *Poetika Kino* (1927), and printed in English translation in *Screen* v 15 n 3, outline an area of study which has been almost totally neglected since the Soviet poetician first raised the issue. As the semiologist Emilio Garroni points out,¹ Eikhenbaum's thesis is still far in advance of the vast majority of recent theoretical positions regarding the cinema. Although some psychologists, specialising in the psychology of perception, and one or two art historians, such as Erwin Panofsky,² have commented on the question of the mutual interdependence of images and verbal language, film theorists have on the whole evaded the issue by rigorously separating the manifestations of verbal language from the image strip. The ensuing restriction of the presence of verbal language to its written or spoken manifestations has produced two types of answer to the question of the relation between verbal language and the cinema. The first and most primitive attitude tends to measure the cinematicity of individual films by the amount of verbal language they contain: the more language, the less cinematic the film. Traces of this psychoanalytically most interesting desire to censor 'the word' can still be found in many film reviews (eg, the emphasis on 'showing' rather than 'telling') and in the flight from articulated language which characterises much of the writing of so-called avant-garde film makers. The second, more sophisticated attitude is exemplified by the work of Christian Metz, who breaks up a film into a series of separate bands, thus providing a territory for the written/spoken manifestations of language which is both specific and distinct from the image band. On the question of the signifieds in films, Metz does point out that they are sectioned out of semantic substance, but he does not allow for the fact that the plane of content, which is ideational and therefore verbal, is

60 organised by internal speech,³ which is a language with a specific mode of organisation differing from that of spoken/written language. The possible structuring impact of modes of internal speech on the iconic codes is not accounted for in Metz's circles of specificity either. Although in Metz's semiology language is most definitely a non-specific code and therefore situated on the side of the codes of content, the internal speech which forms an integral part of any filmic system is quite probably a cinematic code (as opposed to a filmic code) in its own right, ie, a code specific to the cinema and presumably television. The precise nature of the difference between cinematic internal speech and other forms of internal speech still has to be established, but due to the special nature of the relation between the other cinematic codes and internal speech, as will be argued later, it is almost inevitable that cinematic internal speech must differ from that in comic strips, figurative paintings, or indeed from the internal speech that occurs in everyday life. The 'oversight' of internal speech as a language in Metz's writing is in fact conditioned by his definition of language itself: 'Language is a technico-sensorial unity, immediately graspable in perceptual experience'.⁴ As internal speech is not subject to such an empirical apprehension, its existence is overlooked or denied. At best, it is considered as an unspoken but nevertheless formally exact equivalent of phonetically enunciated speech. In this way, it can be assimilated into the overall plane of content and internal speech thus becomes no more than an unspoken 'actualisation' of the meanings produced, the kind of thing which in written or spoken form becomes a paraphrase of the content or a critical commentary.

Eikhenbaum's intuition that the language of internal speech differs functionally from 'manifested' language was specifically formulated two years later in the theses published by the Prague Linguistic Circle in 1929. However, although the Prague theses do correct Eikhenbaum's assumption that internal speech is almost totally absent from everyday life, where according to Eikhenbaum 'external' speech predominates, the formulation in the theses still appears less nuanced and less accurate than Eikhenbaum's concept. With Christian Metz, the Prague School did regard internal speech, ie, thought, as formally equivalent to the externalised manifestations of that thought, while for Eikhenbaum, as Emilio Garroni points out,

'the very act of thinking consists in the organisation of our internal speech along specific modalities and conditions, . . . to the extent that we sometimes find it hard to translate an internal discourse into an external one, as if the difference between the respective codes raised the kind of problems and difficulties of translation analogous to the ones encountered in translation proper'.⁵

This insight was developed further by the linguist and psychologist L M Vygotsky and more recently by Garroni in his *Progetto di Semiotica*.⁶ For our present purposes, it suffices to be able to point to the differences between thought-language and manifested speech. The most important differences become abundantly clear when we consider both languages in relation to Roman Jakobson's model of communication.⁷ In thought, addresser and addressee are identical, and this means that the context within which the communication takes place does not have to be rendered more explicit nor do the problems raised by the mode of contact have to be taken into account, ie, no noise is possible in the channel of communication, there is no need for redundancies or for meta-linguistic explications of the code, the phatic function disappears almost completely, etc. In short, internal speech (thought) can operate with extreme forms of abbreviation, condensations, image equivalents or fragments of image equivalents, extraordinary syntagmatic distortions, and so on. In fact, all the mechanisms which Freud detected to be at play in dream work, can be seen to be at work in internal speech as well. It may not be entirely superfluous to point out that this does not mean that internal speech is identical to dream thoughts, nor that the film text is equivalent to a dream text. The process of transformation, however, from thoughts is that the former is already a product resulting from a transformation process acting on what one could call the primary verbal material, the order of the (verbal) signifier. It would appear therefore that the phenomenal surface of the film text, with its multiplicity of overlapping, intersecting, redoubling, continuous codes (including, of course, written and spoken forms of language) is enmeshed within the network of internal speech which presides over its production, while internal speech is in its turn a product of what we are tempted to call thought-work. At this point it may become clearer why it was suggested earlier in this essay that filmic internal speech is quite probably a code specific to the cinema: it is necessary to assume that the relation between on the one hand the plurality of codes Metz describes and on the other hand the internal speech which both produces and is produced by the filmic system, is a dialectical one: they are mutually interdependent, producing each other. Such an assumption is necessary if the establishing of an arbitrary and uncontrollable hierarchy between internal speech and the other codes is to be avoided. As for instance different types of montage put into place different modes of internal speech, so do changes in internal speech entail different filmic systems, ie, including different types of montage. The study of the causes which determine these changes falls outside the scope of the present article, but it may perhaps be useful to suggest that at this point historical and dialectical materialism would have to be called upon to provide the answers.

The crucial importance attached to verbal language in the con-

62 struction of iconic texts may appear extravagant and it might even be interpreted as an attempt to re-introduce the old supremacy of literature over cinema. This is most certainly not the case, as a careful reading of the formulation of the comments will have shown. However, the repression of verbal language, which is the alternative to the view defended in this essay, produces the most regrettable misconceptions, as has been demonstrated time and time again in the field of psychoanalysis. As Eikhenbaum commented: 'When the linguistic means of film had yet to be defined, film . . . concerned itself exclusively with creating illusion and imitating "nature"'. In other words, trends such as *cinéma vérité*, the forms of experimental cinema which are supposed to be 'experienced', Bazin and Kracauer's claims for an 'ontological' realism of the cinema and the calls for 'pure' cinema, all revolve around a misrecognition of the organising function of verbal language in filmic systems.

Another misunderstanding that must be avoided is the assumption that the film text is somehow totally translatable into verbal language, as such a view would entail that the film text is merely an illustration of a pre-existing verbal text, adding nothing, losing nothing. This view denies the dialectical relationship outlined earlier. Finally, the idealist attitude which equates the unanalysed with the ineffable must equally be rejected: as Freud remarked about the analysis of dreams: 'the dream thoughts which we are led to by interpretation cannot, from the nature of things, have any definite endings; they are bound to branch out in every direction into the intricate network of our world of thought'. In the same way, the analysis of representational texts cannot have an ending: there will always be unanalysed material, but no unanalysable material. Except perhaps in one particular sense, but we will come back to this possibility in the form of a question at the end of this essay.

II

'Film metaphor is entirely dependent on verbal metaphor. The viewer can understand it only when he possesses a corresponding metaphoric expression in his own verbal baggage'.

'The film metaphor is not realised in the consciousness of the viewer to the point of a complete verbal statement'.

With these two statements, Eikhenbaum puts the entire argument about metaphor in the cinema into a radically new perspective which, unfortunately, has never been followed up.

The most lucid account available regarding metaphor in the cinema can be found in Christian Metz's essay 'Current Problems of Film Theory'.⁸ Metz argues that there are no real metaphors in the cinema, only juxtapositions with a metaphorical value. This

conclusion is based on the fact that in a real metaphor, 'the common element or term of comparison at the centre of the metaphor is not made explicit', while in the so-called filmic metaphor, 'the two terms are co-present on the image strip so that their resemblance is inevitably made explicit'. The basic assumption underlying this assertion is that the terms at play in the metaphor must share the same matter of expression. As the term metaphor originated in relation to literature, this co-materiality never posed any problem and was taken for granted: it was not necessary to state explicitly this condition as it did not contribute to any distinction between the words involved in a metaphor and any other combination of words. When the term was applied to filmic texts, the condition of co-materiality on the plane of expression was simply accepted without question. As literature consisted of a verbal chain, arguments about filmic metaphors treated film as if it consisted exclusively of an image strip. This tacit assumption is all the more surprising in the context of Metz's own emphasis on the fact that a filmic system embodies a conjunction of a variety of matters of expression. Although Metz, following Jean Mitry, is undoubtedly correct in rejecting the term metaphor for the type of juxtaposition which had been passed off as metaphor (Metz calls it a metaphoric use of the term metaphor), no allowance is made for the fact that a unit of reading, ie, a *lexie* in the cinema, consisting of a conjunction of signs with different matters of expression, could possibly combine to produce a metaphor. Moreover, whatever number of different matters of expression enter into a filmic system, verbal language must be included: no film can exist without it, because internal speech, which in the final analysis is verbal, forms an integral part of filmic writing, as was suggested in the first part of this essay.

It is extremely difficult and perhaps even pointless to try and establish whether it is manifested verbal language or internal speech which generates metaphoric images, or whether certain images generate a verbal metaphor on the level of internal speech. For the moment, I will limit myself to giving a number of instances where the interaction of verbal language and images could, amongst other things, produce metaphoric effects. In order not to confuse the issue by prematurely labelling certain *lexies* as 'metaphors', they will be referred to as 'literalisms'. The reason for this neologism is to be found in the fact that there are a great many images/image sequences which provide a representational equivalent to the verbal image. Moreover, a number of these literalisms involve the type of play on words Freud analyses in his books on jokes, rather than metaphors properly speaking. These verbo-visual puns often involve a play on the polysemic aspects of the image as well as the polysemic qualities of the verbal terms involved, as will become evident in the example quoted from Raoul Walsh's *Pursued*.

Eikhenbaum gives the example of a billiard ball falling into a pocket, suggesting the metaphoric use of the verb 'to fall' in relation to social status or moral values. Other major examples can be found in Eisenstein's *October*, such as the Czar's 'fall' being suggested by the crashing down of the Czar's statue. Another example of such a filmic metaphor (literalism) according to Eikhenbaum, is the use of high and low angles which become significant in context of the verbal phrases 'to look up to/down on, someone'. Other literalisms can be brought about by the interaction of camera movement with verbal language, such as, the 'soaring' crane shots which are sometimes used to suggest extreme joy. A number of cliché shots also qualify as literalisms, such as any image which has two people (as a rule from opposite sexes and fairly young) together with some form of fire, whether it be a burning match, a candle or a forest fire: all such images can become literalisms because of verbal metaphors such as 'flame' for 'love' and 'fire' for 'passion'. Apart from such well known but relatively isolated examples of literalisms, there are many more instances, some obvious, others requiring a play with/on language for all their resonances to come to the fore.

In Ernst Lubitsch's film *The Mountain Cat* (1921), Lt Alexis (Paul Heidemann) declares his love to Grischka (Pola Negri) by taking a cardboard heart from under his coat and offering it to her. She accepts it and demonstrates her consuming passion by consuming (ie, eating) the heart. The first action is readily understandable as most European languages have an expression of the type 'to give your heart away'. The second action presents a number of problems which can only be solved by people with a good knowledge of German. In fact, the metaphoric comparison suggested in this essay ('to consume') is possible in English and French, but as far as I know not in German. On the other hand, some regional Dutch dialects have an expression which corresponds exactly to the image presented: someone who eats hearts, meaning a ruthless and greedy person. In fact, the eating of the heart most probably is only one of a series of lexies which associate Grischka with a lioness, thus again, but in a roundabout way, imbuing the image with a metaphoric effect. Later in the same film, Grischka, heartbroken because she's lost her lover, cries herself a river. Literally. This time, the German language does provide the corresponding expression.

Some of these literalisms coincide with more than one verbal expression and function as a point of intersection for a number of semantic strands branching out into the overall tissue of the text. In Sam Fuller's *Pick Up on South Street* (1953), there is a rather extraordinary and at first sight pointless camera movement in the scene when Candy (Jean Peters) and Skip (Richard Widmark) first kiss after he has knocked her down. The shot starts off in a close-up, then the camera backs away a little and travels a few

yards to the left while still focussing on the kissing couple who haven't moved. In the course of the camera movement a new element has entered the image: two chains, hooked together, right in front of the camera, vertically dividing the frame. After holding this shot for a few seconds, the camera simply moves back to its starting point, the close-up of the couple (still kissing). Although up to that point in the film there is little in the film to suggest that Skip and Candy are falling in love, the hook which momentarily occupies the very centre of the frame, suggests that they are 'getting hooked'. Simultaneously, we must bear in mind that Skip is 'on the hook' (the police are blackmailing him), as is Candy (she must retrieve the vital piece of microfilm). Finally the hook is part of the chain from which hangs the McGuffin of the film, the microfilm. The small, apparently insignificant camera movement is thus seen to hook into a variety of semantic strands, producing a wealth of meanings, but only if verbal expressions are considered to be an integral part of the signifying system of the film.

All the preceding examples provide instances of a shot or part of a shot functioning as a literal representation of a 'figure of speech'. But such literalisms are not limited to figurative images. In Monte Hellman's *Two Lane Blacktop* (1972), the last image on the filmstrip, representing the final 'burn out', looks as if the celluloid filmstrip is literally burning in the projector, and projectionists when first projecting the film in fact do tend to leap up and switch off the machine to prevent any further damage.

Finally, there are literalisms which appear to be generated by the very semantic structure of the film. A striking example of such a case occurs in Terence Fisher's last film, *Frankenstein and the Monster From Hell* (1973). As usual in Fisher's films, a small but complex series of oppositions forms the basic semantic structure of the film: body/soul, mind/body and mind/soul, together with the moral values embodied in these oppositions. The monster is a composite of the huge animalistic body of a pathological killer, with the mind of a scientist and the soul of an artist. Throughout the film, the monster is 'torn' between the above mentioned agencies and its death takes the form of a literalism: the monster is literally torn apart. This example also suggests that literalisms are not necessarily confined to small isolated reading units explicitly referring to some verbal expression, but that the code of internal speech is a constant though absent companion to the phenomenal surface of the text. It is in fact this internal speech which, at least in this last example, appears to construct an 'other scene' which systematically re-doubles the surface of the text.

It is a little unfortunate to have to refer to the 'surface' of the text, as if to suggest that internal speech is somehow beneath or under it, thus creating the illusion of depth. In fact, though

66 inaudible and invisible, internal speech is just as much on the surface as any other code in the filmic system. Only its locus is elsewhere: the 'other scene' which articulates the discourse of the producing subject within the total textual network.

Finally, it is possible to argue that there exists a type of literalism which is specifically and exclusively language generated, although nothing short of a thorough analysis of distortions analogous to those produced by dream work will disengage the verbal text which engendered a number of key signifiers. After the elaborate analysis of some sequences of Raoul Walsh's *Pursued* (1947)⁹ it appeared that the circulation of a few privileged but repressed verbal signifiers (eg, 'phallus' and 'to shoot' in the sense of 'consummating the sex act') put into place not only visual signifying configurations (flashes of light) but also produced distortions on the sound track (noise level of gunshots), determined camera set ups and even physical attributes of characters (eg, the one-armed Grant Callum (Dean Jagger)).

III

Questions:

1. From the example of *The Mountain Cat*, it would appear that the language in which the text is produced (and this includes the production by the reader) is far from irrelevant. The film maker cannot but organise the text in function of his own internal speech. If the director is Japanese, the Japanese language will be present in that film, even if it is utterly silent and without any intertitles, as is the case, eg, in Kinugasa's *A Page Of Madness* (1926). On the other hand, the reader cannot but have recourse to his own, necessarily limited knowledge of languages to activate the signifying structures of the text. It should be stressed that this does not mean that it is impossible to read a text which was composed within the domain of another language, as the code of internal speech is only one of the many codes at work in the text, the vast majority of which are cross-cultural. But this presence of internal speech, tied to a specific verbal language, nevertheless deals a serious blow to any notion of the cinema as some 'universal' language. Moreover, internal speech not only brings into play the code of language (*langue*) but also the modes of speech (*parole*), including specialised languages, dialects and jargons. This raises the question to what extent the code of internal speech determines the production of the text, rather than to what extent the other codes determine the production of internal speech. Although this approach raises interesting theoretical problems (eg, in the case of emigré directors such as Fritz Lang, etc), it is in fact a side issue. As all 'reading' is a work of text-transformation, there is no overwhelming need to try and reconstruct the internal speech involved in the *first* production of the text, ie, the making

of the film. All productions of the text have equal value provided they adhere to the basic criteria of pertinence, coherence and theoretical rigour. Besides, due to the role of 'thought-work' and the part played by the unconscious in that process, the filmmaker is in no position to claim that 'his' internal speech is the only one admissible in the reading. The only positive conclusion that can be drawn from the knowledge that internal speech is present in the filmic system, is that verbal language is an essential part of any film. As to which language and how essential a part it is, that will depend on the criteria of text construction/transformation within which the reading develops.

2. Does internal speech erupt only intermittently within the text, as the listing of literalisms might suggest, or does verbal language form a genuinely comprehensive system of traces, a geno-text underpinning the entire filmic system? The analysis of *Pursued* mentioned above in fact seems to suggest that the latter could well be the case. Would it then be possible to isolate a limited number of key verbal signifiers in each filmic system, which generate and organise not only the linguistic level of the film, but also the iconic, kinetic, aural, etc signifiers? Moreover, as such signifiers automatically generate semantic configurations, even if by purely chance juxtapositions, these semantic configurations can in their turn generate more signifiers, etc. In this way an extremely complex textual network of basically but not necessarily exclusively verbal signs is spun (cf 'spinning a yarn!'), in which each sign can entertain a multiplicity of relations with any other sign, whatever its substance, form or codification. The films of Alain Robbe-Grillet are in fact constructed along these lines, and it may be significant that it is an anti-illusionist novelist who has divined the basic principles of filmtext generation. However, as Robbe-Grillet also pointed out, there is a qualitative gap between text-generation and text-construction in the cinema, because 'the material' offers resistance due to the presence of what Metz described as the specifically cinematic codes relating to visual iconicity, mechanical duplication, etc. As Robbe-Grillet explained: 'the cinema has to incarnate all fictive elements in some sort of reality. A decor must be found or constructed; for a character one must find an actor. What does that obligation to incarnate mean for the director? It represents a creative contribution by the other (whether that other be a decor or an actor), but also a resistance, ie, a kind of material that has to be overcome, to be modelled'.¹⁰

It is within this forcefield set up by the tension between verbal and 'other' material that the filmtext finds its place. Because of the nature of that 'other' material, the mode of presence of the verbal geno-text within the film is primarily that of the traces of its absence, the marks of the fact that the material was modelled by words which themselves have disappeared: 'phallus', 'to shoot'

3. Great play has been made on the fact that an image can never be completely rendered in words: the continuous field of the photographically obtained image can never be completely covered by the digitally organised net of verbal language. Something always slips through the maze, something is always lost in the gaps, ie, in the very difference between the two texts. The relationship between the verbal text and the image appears analogous to that between the discourse of/on psychoanalysis and 'the real'. Serge Leclair described the task of psychoanalysis as that of 'unmasking the real', but he continues:

'The real is rather like those clever little animals who, whenever you summon them, invariably go elsewhere. One has to be wiley, even triply so: first in order to recognise it without mistaking its presence for its reality; then to summon it, because it doesn't answer to a name and it is illusion itself which has to be deployed in order to pretend to ensnare it; and lastly, one still has to be canny enough not to become the smug prisoner of the device thus contrived.'¹¹

This thing which always escapes and yet is present, this vital something which one can't quite get hold of but nevertheless constitutes the essential distinguishing mark between the order of language and the image, is this perhaps the 'ineffable' third sense Roland Barthes speaks of?¹² Although 'ineffable' is not strictly accurate: even if it doesn't answer to a name, it can be spoken, even if in the very speaking of it, it merely acts as Leclair's little animal: it goes elsewhere.

4. Finally, a brief and tentative hypothesis: if, as Roland Barthes says in *Le Plaisir du Texte*,¹³ the oedipal situation serves to tell stories, is the section of the avant-garde which flees from articulated language in fact regressing to a pre-oedipal situation, a forclosure of castration involving a romantic disavowal of the Law of the Father, ie, the symbolic order? There is on the other hand a cinematic avant-garde, exemplified by directors such as Robbe-Grillet, which goes beyond the fascination with the secret-to-be-revealed and, assuming castration, engages in a joyous play with the order of language, celebrating the founding lack which produces/activates desire. Robbe-Grillet's texts could be described as a celebration and mise-en-scène of desire, inscribing the orgasmic pleasure of the dispersal of the subject, of loss and the transgression of the Law, while the miscognition and disavowal which governs the romantic anarchic flight from the order of language can only produce an illusory (imaginary) return to some form of symbiosis with the mother and the problematic of primary narcissism and the mirror-phrase.¹⁴

1. Emilio Garroni, 'Langage verbal et éléments non-verbaux dans le message filmico-télévisuel', in *Cinéma: Théorie, Lectures*, ed D Noguez, special issue of *Revue d'Esthétique*, 1973.
2. 'Iconographical analysis, dealing with images, stories and allegories instead of with motifs, . . . presupposes a familiarity with specific themes or concepts as transmitted through literary sources, whether acquired by purposeful reading or by oral tradition'. Erwin Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology*, OUP, 1939.
3. Except of course in the instances of spoken/written synopses, commentaries or critical analyses. Such texts however do only in exceptional cases form part of the filmic system. A notable instance of such an exception is the benshi-commentary in Japanese films up to approximately 1935.
4. Interview in Raymond Bellour, *Le Livre des Autres*, Paris, 1971, p 276, quoted by Stephen Heath in 'Metz's Semiology: A Short Glossary', *Screen*, v 14, n 1/2, p 218.
5. E Garroni, *idem*.
6. Emilio Garroni, *Progetto di Semiotica*, Bari, 1972; Lev S Vygotsky, *Thought and Language* (Moscow, 1934, American translation published by the Technology Press and Wiley, 1962) and *Selected Psychological Studies*, Moscow 1956.
7. Roman Jakobson, 'Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics', in *Style in Language*, ed T Sebeok, MIT 1960.
8. *Screen*, v 14, n 1/2, pp 70-78.
9. Paul Willemen, 'Pursued: The Fugitive Subject', in *Raoul Walsh*, Edinburgh Film Festival 1974.
10. André Gardies, *Alain Robbe-Grillet*, series *Cinéma d'aujourd'hui*, nr 70, Eds, Seghers, Paris 1971.
11. Serge Leclair, *Démasquer le réel*, Eds du Seuil, Paris 1971.
12. Roland Barthes, 'The Third Meaning: Notes on Some of Eisenstein's Stills', in *Artforum*, January 1973.
13. Roland Barthes, *Le Plaisir du Texte*, Eds du Seuil, Paris, 1973, pp 75-76: 'The Death of the Father will take many of the pleasures of literature away. If there is no Father any more, what's the good of telling stories? Doesn't all narrative in fact come down to Oedipus? To tell stories, isn't that always to engage in a search for one's origins, to enunciate one's dealings with the Law, to enter into the dialectic of affection and hate? Nowadays, Oedipus and the narrative are thrown out in one and the same gesture: no more loving, no more fearing, no more telling stories. As fiction, Oedipus did at least serve some purpose: to make good novels, to tell stories well (this was written after a viewing of Murnau's *City Girl*). Stephen Heath, in his reading of Barthes, *Vertige du Déplacement*, Paris 1974, p 171, comments: 'To tell stories is to want the oedipal pleasure, the intellectual pleasure of the unveiling, of knowledge acquired at last; the security of the narrative which winds its way towards that end, already silhouetted on the horizon from the very start, the outlines becoming clearer as the sequences go by, up to the ultimate moment of the "explosion of truth" . . . the comfort — one is all right at/in the end: the security of Meaning, of the Father, of the Law.'
14. Evidence to support this hypothesis can be found in Paul Sharits' film *Piece Mandala* (1966) and in the short statement accompanying the film, reprinted in the catalogue of the Fourth Experimental Film Festival at Knokke, 1967-68, p 36. Like Walsh's *Pursued*, *Piece Mandala* presents a primal phantasy, but Sharits does not pose the central questions of Oedipus: Who am I? Where do I fit in the

Order of things? In that sense, Sharits' film shows evidence of a regression to the pre-oedipal structures: he merely presents the problem of differentiation/identity, while Walsh presents it *and* attempts to locate its significance in relation to the position of the subject. The primary narcissism at work in Sharits' film is (probably unconsciously) underlined in his own written statement, where he points out that the film has to do with 'circularity and simultaneity' and with turning 'perception inside-out' (read: with Narcissus and the Mirror). Other films by Sharits, such as *N.O.T.H.I.N.G.*, *Razor Blades* and *Ray Gun Virus*, also bear witness to the obsessional preoccupation with the primal scene and the disavowal of castration, locking the films into a pre-oedipal structure. Whether it is the primary narcissism which governs the flight from articulated language (Sharits even neglects the optical sound-track, using the perforations as 'sound'), or the other way around, is not at issue in a reading of the films: all one can do is state the level of the discourse.

ROBERT WISE, ELEANOR POWELL, GARSON KANIN, FRITZ LANG, WALTER LANG, MAUREEN O'SULLIVAN, FRED ZINNEBMAN, RENE CLAIR, WALTER NEWMAN, OSWALD MORRIS, WENDELL MAYES, SUSANNAH YORK, HENRY HATHAWAY, DONALD OGDEN STEWART AND JAMES MASON ARE AMONG THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE TALKED IN DETAIL ABOUT THEIR CAREERS IN **FOCUS ON FILM**. THIS MAGAZINE HAS ALSO INCLUDED CAREER AND BIOGRAPHICAL STUDIES OF BOB HOPE, LON CHANEY, SERGEI BONDARCHUK, KEN HUGHES, ROWLAND BROWN, MONICA VITTI, PER LINDBERG, LEO McCAREY, WILLIS O'BRIEN, CAROL REED, MAX REINHARDT AND MANY MORE. **FOCUS ON FILM** ALSO FEATURES FILM REVIEWS (WITH CONCISE PROFILES OF LEADING ARTISTS), BOOK REVIEWS AND OTHER ITEMS. FOR ANYONE CONCERNED WITH THE HISTORY AND ENJOYMENT OF FILM, **FOCUS ON FILM** IS INDISPENSABLE. THERE ARE TWENTY ISSUES TO DATE, EACH COSTING 45p POST FREE FROM **FOCUS ON FILM**, 108 NEW BOND STREET, LONDON W1Y 0QX. WRITE OR PHONE (01-499 4733) FOR A LEAFLET DESCRIBING CONTENTS OF FIRST 17 ISSUES IN DETAIL. ALL BACK NUMBERS ARE AVAILABLE — BUT HURRY.

An interview with George Hoellering

In Screen v 15 n 2, Summer 1974, we published a number of texts on the Brecht-Dudow-Eisler-Ottwald film Kuhle Wampe of 1932. One of the producers of the film was Mr George Hoellering. We are glad to publish the following interview with Mr Hoellering on the making of the film as a supplement to the material in our special issue on Brecht, which should be consulted for the full credits of Kuhle Wampe. The interview was recorded at the Academy Cinema on July 2nd 1974; the interviewers were Ben Brewster and Colin MacCabe.

* * *

Could you tell us how the film Kuhle Wampe¹ came to be made and about your role as producer?

There was a film company which distributed Russian films and produced a variety of social documentary films, called Prometheus-Film. The leading figure in it was a Mr Unfried – I've forgotten his initials.² Although we didn't know it, at that time Prometheus-Film was in financial difficulties, but they hoped to save themselves by making a positive film on the *Jugendbewegung*, the youth movement – a very optimistic youth film that would glorify sport for the workers. Unfried was very close to Robert Scharfenberg, who had been responsible for the script of *Mutter Krausens Fahrt ins Glück*.³ Scharfenberg was a splendid fellow, a sort of Cockney type, he could do everything in film, he knew every trick. He interested Dudow, Dudow interested Brecht, and eventually they turned this 'positive' film on the youth movement into *Kuhle Wampe*.

Whose idea was the Kuhle Wampe theme originally – was it Brecht's?

No, that's the funny part, Prometheus wanted to make some money and save the company with the youth film idea. Dudow's idea was very different, and he got away with it. He was the first one to talk about *Kuhle Wampe*, who had been to the place, and in that sense most of the ideas came from him. He talked about it to Brecht; Brecht and Dudow were great friends and had a great respect for each other, but Dudow knew exactly how to use Brecht and where to use him. Dudow was the driving force behind the film and I think the greatest credit belongs to Dudow, rather than to Brecht. Brecht of course was responsible for all the texts, everything written was by him.

Ottwald was a script-writer, but Dudow was such a dominant personality that he quickly got what he wanted from Ottwald. As for me (I knew neither Brecht nor Dudow previously), I was asked by Prometheus if I would help in this production, as they needed somebody with expertise in film production – Dudow had not had a great deal of experience in the cinema. I was fascinated by the idea of working with Brecht and accepted, subject to my being allowed to control the technical side of the production, in particular having a good cameraman and sound man. My conditions were accepted. I got Günther Krampf, the best Austrian cameraman of the period.⁴ He, the production manager and I made up a Viennese trio, who worked very well together. The whole set-up was not a collective, in the sense that everything was discussed beforehand by everyone at meetings – anyway, I would not have been a party to anything like that as you would never have got a film made that way. It was a sort of collective in the financial sense – ie, all of us, equally, got practically no pay, or at least very little and at irregular intervals. These were the conditions under which we all worked together. The work soon divided itself up automatically. This was not particularly planned, there were no special discussions about it. As for me, my business was to mediate between all these complicated artists, including Hanns Eisler. But I got on very well with them and I think we did achieve results.

Then, of course, there was the financial question. I had all the meetings with Prometheus; the contracts were my business, Brecht and the other members of the unit were quite happy to leave all this kind of thing to me. Prometheus said they would supply certain things: one week's studio facilities, the raw stock, the laboratory costs and a very small amount of cash. But we ourselves had to supply at least 50,000 marks, which was a lot of money at that time. Luckily I met a man – to give you an illustration of what he was like, he had two Rolls-Royces, one he drove himself and a second one driven by his chauffeur, which had to follow along behind in case he got a puncture. This man said to me:

'I am willing to give you the 50,000 marks, but I can play the guitar, very well and loudly.'

And I had to listen for hours to his loud playing – which was, indeed, very good. Then he said:

'I must have a song in the film, otherwise you can't have the money.'

So I went back to Brecht and said:

'Look, we can have the money, but that's his condition.'

Brecht kept his cool.

'Tell him that's OK, but he'll have to grow a beard. Once the

beard is grown, I'll write a song for him.'

I went back to him and said:

'Yes, that's fine.'

He said:

'Come to Hiddensee next weekend.'

I said: 'What for?'

He said:

'We'll draw up the contract there and give you the cheque.'

I said:

'You can give me the cheque here in Berlin, there's no need to go all the way to Hiddensee.'

'No, I only give cheques at Hiddensee.'

So I said:

'Good, then I'll come to Hiddensee.'

Hiddensee was a fashionable holiday resort, about seven hours from Berlin by car. I went there, he gave me a good meal, I got my cheque, there was no contract, nothing. He said:

'Well, Brecht says he'll write me a song when I've grown a beard, so I've started growing it already.'

I went away with the cheque, very excited, of course, and drove the whole night through to Berlin. When I came up the Kurfürstendamm, I saw an enormous queue outside the Darmstädter Bank. I thought, 'That's funny, that's the bank where I have to cash my cheque', so I stopped and walked over to the bank. There was a notice on the door saying that the bank was closed, it was bankrupt.⁵ But luckily enough my cheque had an earlier date – a technicality I spotted. And I knew a lawyer of Brüning's, the Catholic Chancellor, very well, and had close connections with the Catholics, one in particular, a Dr Sonnenschein, who was a left sympathiser and anti-fascist, like myself. It took a week, but our cheque was finally cleared. This was the summer of 1931, and production now really started.

Everything went smoothly, except on one occasion. Over one weekend I organised the sports festival in the film, and money was needed for tickets and to transport food for the people to eat, and so on. I went to Prometheus and said, 'My cheque for this weekend must be for so-and-so-much.' They said, 'Fine.' The next day they telephoned me. 'We must see you urgently, you must postpone the shooting.' I said, 'Why? It's all organised, you can't postpone it.' They said, 'We have no money.' I said, 'But the production money you hold was paid in by us.' They replied, 'We're under orders from Münzenberg.' Münzenberg was the Communist propaganda chief, in charge of the entire Communist press.⁶ So I went to Münzenberg and said, 'Look, this is unfair, you're stealing our money. If I have to halt the shooting, I shall tell everyone that I can't pay them because you stole the money. So get going and find the money, we must have it.' Münzenberg was livid. I said, 'Look here, I'm not a Communist, I'm not

74 involved in any of your activities, I'm just responsible for this shooting and I have to pay the people. And you have to hand over the money, it's not yours to take.' He replied, 'We control the film company.' I said, 'Yes, but we have an agreement, and this is *our* money.' So finally he paid up and we shot the sports festival.

From then on we had no difficulties until we had nearly finished the film – there was still about ten per cent of the shooting to be done, mostly inexpensive scenes out of doors. At this point Prometheus-Film went bankrupt and the lab refused to do any more work for us. The cutting rooms, everything was closed to us. We didn't know what to do. Then, one day, I saw in the papers that a Mr Wechsler had arrived in Berlin. He was the owner of Praesens-Film in Zürich. I telephoned him and said, 'Look, we have here an almost finished film (Dudow had somehow managed to carry on editing the film in the meantime). I want to show you as much of the film as is finished. Are you interested?' He said, 'Yes' – his conversation was always very brief. I showed him the film in a cinema on the Friedrichstrasse. He saw it and said, 'Yes, what do you need?' I said, 'An office, a telephone, so-and-so much cash and a guarantee for the lab.' 'Come with me.' He took me to an office and said, 'Here's your office, your telephone and your cheque.' That was all. And Praesens-Film took over as from that moment. There is one thing in the book on the film⁷ I must correct: the editors say that even Praesens-Film did not cover the costs completely in the end. Mr Wechsler is still very much alive and you can check with him – he gave us every penny we wanted and was absolutely marvellous. And he is Swiss – he had nothing to do with Germany. That is how we were able to finish the film.

Dudow sometimes had problems with the studio because of running over time. He was more a stage director and wanted more rehearsals. One of my functions was to bring him and the cameraman together. That's why I had Günther Krampf. I could translate to Krampf what Dudow wanted, and then we could shoot. But in those days there were great difficulties because he took too much time with each scene. There is a scene in the film which takes place on the S-Bahn, the metropolitan railway. I went to Brecht – he could direct actors – and said, 'Can you direct them through this and prepare the work, so that we can then call in Dudow and Krampf for the shooting?' So Brecht did most of the directing of this scene because he had the time to rehearse with them. Then we came with Dudow, went through it again, and shot it. And we were able to finish on time in the studio – that was very important.

The moment the whole film was finished, the day after I left that office with the telephone, it was occupied by another production team making a nationalistic film about Hindenburg – 'The Battle of Tannenberg'. That's what things were like in Germany in 1932.

The scene in the apartment and all the other indoors scenes were shot in the studio. Finally we even had to move some of the tent scenes into the studio. They were not shot at Kuhle Wampe because Kuhle Wampe was a very extraordinary place, fantastically tidy and more or less petty-bourgeois. It's true there were many 'proletarians' there, but if you'd seen this proletariat you'd have been surprised. If the German proletariat and the German middle classes were together, at the sea-side, say, they all looked alike. Brighton would have looked a slum by comparison with Kuhle Wampe. The inhabitants were all neat and tidy, they had their little gardens and so on, and they didn't want all these film people trampling about there. To shoot these scenes there, particularly at night, with all that equipment, would have been much more expensive. So I moved the whole thing to the studio. I could do what I liked about such things, and everyone was happy about it. Dudow was particularly good, in the editing as well – to the best of my knowledge, he had never edited a film before. Prometheus were worried about that. But I knew from the way he talked and picked my brains that he would be able to edit the film. We just gave him a very good joiner, an old woman who had joined hundreds of films, and could give him technical advice when needed. We saw the rushes, day by day, and they were excellent. Brecht was very good, too. My friends always ask me about my arguments with Brecht: surely we must have had at least one row, as Brecht rowed with everyone. But no, Brecht and I got on very well; he was fascinated by the whole process of film-making, and was forever asking me questions about it.

The petty-bourgeois appearance of the German proletariat must have been one of the reasons why the film was so poorly received in the USSR.

Yes, that's a very interesting story. The book says⁸ that the film had its world première in Russia, but it wasn't a real world première at all. The Russians saw the film first and then invited Brecht; he wouldn't have gone otherwise. He went, and there was a very selective screening for a small number of people. Brecht was very disappointed, and they said to him, 'How can we show this film? Your "poor" people have motor-bikes and this marvellous holiday place. We haven't got anything like that here. That's why we can't show the film.'

Did you discuss the political aims of the film amongst yourselves? Was the German Communist Party or any other organisation consulted about this?

Well, first of all, this has all been blown up, the question of the

76 political aims, that is. It was a film about unemployment and how it affected people, and it was never discussed in terms of party political aims. The script was there, and you could read what you wanted to into the script. But we did not discuss it from a party political point of view.

We did need the Communist Party's help for one thing, however. There had been Nazi storm troopers around in the area where we were shooting, so we called on the Communist armed squads for our defence on location.

But weren't political organisations also involved in setting up the sports scenes?

No, for that part I must give the credit to my colleague Robert Scharfenberg, who was co-producer with me. He knew all these people from his work on *Mutter Krausens Fahrt ins Glück*, and he arranged it all, through Prometheus-Film, of course. Scharfenberg did it personally, single-handed. And he organised the rehearsals for the singing, the halls where the worker-athletes could assemble in the evenings. Hanns Eisler went along as well and rehearsed them, so that when they reached the spot we could just shoot. You know the singing in the arena that appears in the film, well, that was all rehearsed at night in various halls after work. We all went along, but it was Scharfenberg's work. He did many other things, provided the props and so on, whenever anything was needed he turned up with it. But we also had a very good production manager, a Mr Ehrlich, who saw to it that everyone was on time. With artists like these it was quite a job, but he succeeded. In fact, it was the smoothest and simplest production I've seen. I've worked in the commercial cinema and things did not go as smoothly as they did on *Kuhle Wampe*.

A small point: who is the Kaspar whose signature appears on the 'Collective Presentation'?

First of all, I'm rather suspicious of the authenticity of this document. Brecht would never sign anything, but he's supposed to have signed it. If it is genuine, it could be Caspar Neher,⁹ who was a good friend of ours and who read the script and talked over bits of it with us, privately. Or it could have been the lawyer. I really can't tell you.

Klaus Völker in his Brecht-Chronik names you as the lawyer.¹⁰

Me as the lawyer? Well, only because I made all the contracts.

Were you a lawyer?

No, I'm not a lawyer. He probably jumped to that conclusion because I made all the contracts needed for the film – with Prometheus-Film, with Mr Wechsler, etc.

Not at all. There was one shot with a few nude girls running into the water, and I said, 'Well, we may have trouble with the censor there, but let's try it.' Politically there was no discussion of the problem.

But the sports seem to be presented as a kind of allegory of revolutionary politics, accompanied as they are by a song with the refrain 'Learn to win'. Wasn't this indirect presentation adopted in anticipation of censorship?

No, that's what was left of the original youth film. If it was a manoeuvre, the manoeuvre was for the benefit of Mr Unfried and Prometheus-Film; the sports scenes were there to satisfy them.

Do you think that the film suffered much from the cuts imposed by the censors?

No, I don't think so.¹¹

Notes

1. The film took its title from the tent settlement of Kuhle Wampe, on the shore of Lake Müggelsee, about an hour's bus ride from Berlin. Originally a week-end settlement (dating from 1913), by the time the film was made it was inhabited largely by unemployed men and their families, who lived there all the year round. It was remarkable for its neatness and tidiness.
2. Emil Unfried (1892-1949), by training an engineer, joined the German Social Democratic Party in 1912, Spartakist and founder-member of the German Communist Party 1919, worked as Party organiser in Stuttgart and Berlin until his expulsion as a rightist in 1924, then joined the 'Münzenberg-Konzern' as film producer and distributor, major shareholder with Münzenberg and Pfeiffer in Prometheus-Film GmbH on its foundation in 1926. Remained in Berlin in the film distribution industry 1933-45, arrested by Soviet occupation authorities 1945, died in prison camp 1949.
3. Directed Piel Jutzi, 1929 (Prometheus-Film).
4. Günther Krampf, director of photography, his German films include *Orlacs Hände* (dir Wiene 1924), *Der Student von Prag* (dir Galeen 1926), *Die Büchse von Pandora* (dir Pabst 1928), *Narkose* (dir Abel 1929), *Alraune* (dir Oswald 1930), *Cyankali* (dir Tintner 1930) and *Kuhle Wampe* (1932). Emigrated to England 1933, worked as lighting cameraman and director of photography for Gaumont British, Associated British and other companies. Films in England include *Latin Quarter* (dir Sewell 1945), *Meet me at Dawn* (dir Freeland 1947), *This was a Woman* (dir Whelan 1947).
5. The Darmstädter und Nationalbank collapsed on July 13, 1931, the government taking over responsibility for its outstanding obligations; exchange dealings were suspended and banks closed temporarily by an emergency decree on July 14th.

6. Willi Münzenberg (1889-1940), born in Erfurt, active socialist in Switzerland 1910-18 where he met Lenin, Spartakist and founder-member of the German Communist Party 1919, leader of Communist Youth International and International Workers' Aid from 1921, head of Communist Party propaganda and Reichstag member 1924-33, IWA formed the core of a publishing (Neue deutsche Verlag), press (including *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung*) and film (Prometheus-Film) business known as the 'Münzenberg-Konzern', in which he made a practice of employing expelled or disgraced Party members like Unfried; emigrated to Paris 1933, continuing to work for the Comintern and the German Communist Party as propagandist and publisher, called to Moscow 1936, returned to Paris against Party orders, expelled 1937; continued to work for revolutionary organisations, opposed Nazi-Soviet pact, interned 1939, escaped at Fall of France, his body found October 1940, murderers unknown.
7. Bertolt Brecht: *Kuhle Wampe, Protokoll des Films und Materialien*, edited by Wolfgang Gersch and Werner Hecht, Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt 1969. See p 172.
8. *Ibid*, p 185.
9. Caspar Neher (1897-1962), German painter and stage designer, school-friend of Brecht's, worked with him as designer in Munich in 1923 and in Berlin 1924-33; remained in Germany 1933-45, working as a stage designer, principally for the Deutsches Theater, Berlin; worked for the Berliner Ensemble from 1949 until his death.
10. Cf Klaus Völker: *Brecht-Chronik, Daten zu Leben und Werk*, Carl Hanser Verlag, Munich 1971, p 52.
11. Note by Ivo Jarosy:

After the completion of *Kuhle Wampe*, Hoellering was offered further film work in Germany, but now the political situation was deteriorating fast. Films had to be either entirely non-political or of a right-wing tendency, and Jews were undesirable as members of a production team. These conditions Hoellering was not prepared to accept, and he returned to his native Austria. Less than two years later, the Nazis came to power in Germany, and everyone connected with the making of *Kuhle Wampe* was black-listed by them. The situation in the Austrian film industry proved to be not much better than in Germany. Germany was the main market for Austrian films, and any film that was undesirable by the prevailing German criteria stood little chance of being made. Hoellering therefore left for Hungary where, in 1934/35 he produced and directed *Hortobagy* – a film about the Csikos (herdsmen) of the great Hungarian plain, based on a story by one of Hungary's leading writers, Zsigmond Morics.

Hortobagy was an international success and was widely hailed as the first film to capture the spirit of the real Hungary. Istvan Nemeskürty, in his history of the Hungarian cinema, published in Budapest in 1968, calls it 'the best film made in Hungary in the thirties', and it was used in the training of the new generation of Hungarian directors after the war.

Meanwhile, conditions were deteriorating in Hungary, too, as that country began moving into line with its fascist neighbours. Hoellering left for England, where, in 1937, he became a director of the Academy Cinema. He also started preparations for a film, to be called 'One out of Millions' – the story of a young factory worker and his girl, in an England only just emerging from years of economic depression and mass unemployment, and faced with the imminent prospect of war. It was to have been filmed in what would now be called a neo-realist style, starring the young and then un-

known Muriel Pavlov. In 1940, however, in spite of his impeccable anti-fascist credentials, Hoellering was interned as an enemy alien, and this put paid to *One out of Millions*, of which the first test reels were already in the can.

After his release from internment, Hoellering made a number of shorts for the Ministry of Information, and in 1944 produced and directed the documentary *Message from Canterbury*, from a script by Sir Herbert Read and 'starring' the late Archbishop Dr Temple. Hoellering went on to make *Shapes and Forms*, a documentary comparison between primitive and modern art, and finally, after five years of preparation, began shooting *Murder in the Cathedral*, based on T S Eliot's play. The film was made in close collaboration with the author, and Eliot himself spoke the part of the Fourth Tempter. *Murder in the Cathedral* won the Prize for the Best Film in Costume and the Prize for the Best Art Direction at the 1951 Venice Film Festival. Since then, Hoellering has devoted his entire time to the running of the Academy Cinema, which he has enlarged by building two new cinemas on the same site, in addition to the original Academy. He has also served two terms as a Governor of the British Film Institute.

FILM READER

An Annual Devoted To Film Scholarship
edited by students and faculty of
Northwestern University Film Division

The first number of FILM READER is a special issue devoted to semiology and auteurism. Section One includes articles on the semiological codes operant in *Citizen Kane*, introduced by Peter Wollen, author of *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema*.

Section Two provides a post-Sarris view of Hollywood Cinema (1967-1974), with over one hundred bio-filmographies in addition to auteur studies on Sam Peckinpah, Buzz Kulik, Sydney Pollack, Stan Dragoti, Robert Aldrich, Mark L. Lester, Bob Fosse, Steven Spielberg, Robert Benton, and others.

The first issue of FILM READER will be available Winter, 1974. The price of the book-length annual is \$2.00 per copy. Checks should be made payable to FILM READER.

Northwestern University Speech Annex/Film Div
Evanston IL 60201

Edited by Alan Lovell

As announced in the last issue of Screen, we are going to produce a regular feature under the general heading of film culture. The purpose of this feature will be to provide an opportunity for regular and fairly immediate comment to be made on matters (books, meetings, the work of institutions as well as films and television programmes) that relate to the kind of film culture we have in Britain. The main qualification for inclusion in this column will be representative quality; the topic for discussion should have an interest outside of itself. The note on the recent Penguin book Film and Reality perhaps most clearly indicates the purpose of the feature. The book is discussed not because of any intrinsic merit (Stephen Neale makes it clear that he does not have a high regard for it) but because of its easy availability due to its publication by Penguin, because of the fact that its main topic 'Realism' is one of Screen's central concerns and because the book is written from an avowedly educational ('academic') point of view.

Although the main focus of the feature will necessarily be British film culture it will not be exclusively so. Comments on other film cultures are welcome.

The stated aim of *Film and Reality*, by Roy Arnes (Penguin, 1974), is 'to allow the general reader to find his bearings more easily amid the increasingly fragmentary mass of critical writings currently available about the cinema'. This aim, however, is belied by an ignorance of almost all the major critical and theoretical issues raised during the last decade of film writing.

At the simplest level the inadequacies of the book are made evident by the discussion of Stroheim and Renoir. Arnes points out that they were both influenced by nineteenth-century Realist and Naturalist novels but fails to elucidate the aesthetic conventions of Realism and Naturalism and does not even mention the fact that conventions are involved at all.

There is an attempt to give a theoretical status to what is basically a typical British history of the cinema by dividing films into three basic types, each characterised by a certain approach to 'reality': '... the uncovering of the real, the imitating of the real and the questioning of the real'. The basic problem this typology raises is that it requires some kind of initial definition as to what constitutes 'the real'. Presumably Arnes means something like the world external to the self, but this raises enormous philosophical issues centering around human consciousness which

phenomenology, Marxism and psycho-analysis have all revealed as problematic. Armes' brief references to Marx and Freud in no way come to terms with these issues.

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The three categories, roughly equivalent to Realism and Documentary, Hollywood, and European Art Cinema, are given some kind of theoretical respectability by reference to Peter Wollen's attempt to relate Peirce's three categories of the sign (index, icon and symbol) to certain kinds of film. However, Wollen's mistake in ignoring perceptual coding is merely compounded by Armes' attempt to use these categories to divide up the whole of cinema. Hence he writes that those films in category one belong to

' a whole tradition of works in which the aim is quite simply to show the world as it is . . . to place people, objects, settings and experiences as directly as possible in front of the camera and make the audience *see* '.

The major error here is that the medium is assumed to be transparent. The findings of perceptual psychology (see *Psychology and the Visual Arts*, ed James Hogg, Penguin) and the theories of Umberto Eco (see articles in *Cinemantics*, No 1, and *Working Papers in Cultural Studies*, No 3) are totally ignored, despite their evident relevance. This assumption again manifests itself in Armes' thematic readings of various films and directors, where style becomes the transparent bearer of thematic meaning. He even contrives to do this with Godard, whose interpolations vis-à-vis the narrative are read as creating ' . . . a strange jagged rhythm — very much like that of life in any big city '. Godard's project of foregrounding his medium and rendering opaque conventional narrative and dramatic cinematic devices is ignored by Armes, whose impetus is towards reading Godard's films as transparent and mimetic in order to maintain the primacy of message and the unity of aesthetic form.

The theoretical inadequacies of the book are further in evidence in its second section, where Armes deals with films (mainly those made in Hollywood) which he sees as aiming at an ' imitation of life '. Among the aesthetic procedures specific to this type of cinema, Armes includes narrative, drama and spectacle, none of which is given a satisfactory definition, with the result that the precise relation of this kind of cinema to reality is once again ill-defined, particularly as narrative and drama are to be found in the films of Visconti, de Sica and Kurosawa, all of whom are included in the Realist section of the book, and as Armes' definition of spectacle as life ' made visual, public and dramatic ' is hardly a model of intellectual rigour. All this despite the fact that a number of interesting and illuminating points regarding Hollywood aesthetics and the nature of spectacle have been made in *Monogram*. Any possibility that certain aesthetic procedures common to Hollywood films may be related to American capitalism is ignored.

82 Armes does include a chapter on the Hollywood industry and the movie-moguls but the statement that 'the films they made were glamorous pictures of America, which came out as a fantastic wonderland where every story had a happy ending and the good triumphed over evil ultimately', is both naive and untrue.

In the last section of *Film and Reality* Armes attempts to deal with modernism in the cinema. Here his misreading of Godard is a sign of his inability to understand the basic impulses behind it. His formulation of modernism as the desire to 'question everyday reality' exemplifies this misunderstanding in that it is not so much 'everyday reality' that modernism sets out to question as the forms and conventions in which it is produced and by which it is rendered intelligible.

Armes' unwillingness or inability to come to terms with any of the issues I have mentioned, most of which have been debated for a number of years now, is perhaps the inevitable corollary of his ideal of 'academic detachment', which, within the context of mainstream British culture, seems to be synonymous with intellectual atrophy.

STEPHEN NEALE.

The decision to reject a 'traditional' documentary compilation approach for a serial based on the history of the Women's Suffrage Movement in favour of drama has been described by the producers of *Shoulder to Shoulder* as something of a breakthrough: 'we had to make these women dramatic, we had to make them real. In order to make people relate to them, they had to be human'. The Movement therefore is presented very much in terms of the leading personalities of the Women's Social and Political Union, taking the form of six 75-minute plays centring in turn around one of the Pankhurst family or their spokeswomen, eg Lady Constance Lytton, Annie Kenny.

The serial begins by tracing the origins of the Movement in the radical reformist traditions of the Independent Labour Party and the initial attempts by women to get the vote accepted as a party issue; it then goes on to examine the first wave of militancy leading to martyrdom and imprisonment, the development of the Women's Social and Political Union as an illegal organisation run on hegemonic lines from Paris aimed at dividing the male ruling class, and ends with the break between feminism and socialism resulting from the tactics and structure developed by the WSPU and the final gaining of the vote. As Sheila Rowbotham points out in her history of the women's struggle in Britain (*Hidden from History*), most historical accounts of the women's suffrage movement have concentrated on the Pankhursts as personalities, while

the real social composition of the movement as a whole and the contradictions underlying it still remain unclear. 83

The fictional reconstruction of history into a self-enclosed unit reinforced by identification techniques, which is the method of *Shoulder to Shoulder*, makes any attempt at an historical and political analysis of the period impossible. What emerges is a drama of personal destinies and conflicts in which all determining political and historical factors take the shape of personal qualities of the major protagonists: it is essentially and in all respects indistinguishable from 'classic serials' of recent television such as *The Pallisers* and *The Forsyte Saga* which celebrate the traditions of bourgeois realism as practised in the 19th century novel.

The central feature of the Pankhurst family which emerges from the serial is the deep division brought about by sibling rivalry, a division which eventually becomes manifest in the painful split between feminism and socialism. Christabel, the self-willed, charismatic architect of hegemonic power and urban sabotage is revealed as Emmeline Pankhurst's favourite daughter, and her tenuous allegiance to the family's socialist heritage is seen as springing directly from the politics of the family. On the other hand, Sylvia Pankhurst's commitment to the working class struggle is directly attributed to her attachment to her father's memory (depicted in the style of a Dubonnet advertisement), Keir Hardie becoming his substitute, and from her thwarted attempts to gain her mother's love. Ken Taylor, the scriptwriter, describes her as a 'difficult lady with a masochistic tendency, she wanted to suffer, but perhaps that makes her the most human'.

Within this oedipal *mise-en-scène*, the politics of the Movement are transformed into concrete terms ('We haven't changed facts at all, but we've tried to present people that the audience will like, or will want to know about'): the unity of the unique in the general, the general in the unique, through which the viewer experiences, through empathy, the real laws of the society. The requirement of such a form of representation prevents precisely what is required of it. No insight into knowledge of the determining forces within society can be produced through the use of this mode of representation. As Brecht points out, it is necessary to treat all psychological/moral questions as historical ones in historical drama.

What emerges from such a mode as applied to historical data is nothing more than a sense of moral outrage and admiration of the major protagonists. Thus Christabel's frenzied patriotism is not less correct than Sylvia's pacifism; what unites them is their humanity, their common suffering at the hands of a male-dominated system which imprisons them and subjects them to the tortures of forced feeding. Contradiction is denied in favour of universal values, and history becomes a mere backdrop for a play of personal destinies. The notion of an unchanging humanity as

84 a motive force in history is quite clearly a reactionary one, as Brecht indicates, precisely because it makes it impossible to show how any mass resistance to a system could/can be effected and therefore, lacking any analysis of struggle, any political strategy for the future is rendered obscure and irrelevant.

Shoulder to Shoulder is a serial produced and read in 1974 at a time when the Women's Movement has produced a substantial critique of patriarchal culture and the women's struggle in history. The central issues of the Women's Movement today have a very distinct relevance to this period of British history, and to fore-close on a politico-historical analysis can only be seen as an attempt at recuperation.

There is no doubt that the strategies developed by the WSPU had wide-ranging political effects which can be felt even today. Although a middle-class movement, in its early days it undoubtedly had links with working women's organisations such as the Women's Co-operative Guild; the decision to opt for militant tactics of the kind they did rather than the possibility of mass organisation and industrial action quite clearly had the effect of alienating a large section of working class support. Annie Kenny, one of the few exemplary representatives of the working class, is depicted in the serial as being committed to the aims and objectives of the WSPU out of an unswerving personal loyalty to Christabel.

This inability to pin-point crucial issues in the feminist struggle is a direct result of the nineteenth century notion of drama. In such a situation, any issues which do not happen to be the primary concern of the central protagonists cannot be accounted for within the drama, or else are quickly evacuated. In this sense, Sylvia's community work in the East London Federation remains an incidental and somewhat eccentric activity, theoretically nebulous, the product of personal frustration within the Pankhurst family. As the scriptwriter Ken Taylor says, he is interested in 'character, not propaganda', a point which is elaborated by the producer Verity Lambert: 'women wouldn't have been objective enough', implying that they would have written 'propaganda'. Within the bourgeois ideology of 'humanity' and 'objectivity' the BBC was no doubt wise to entrust the creative aspects of the production to men. Surprisingly perhaps, the serial was devised by three women, Verity Lambert, Midge Mackenzie and Georgia Brown, but the direction and scriptwriting, together with all the technical aspects of the production were undertaken by men.

To posit the opposition documentary-compilation versus drama in relation to the production of a serial of this kind is to provide a reactionary solution to the problem posed by the requirements of representation. The underlying assumptions behind such an opposition suggest that the documentary compilation approach

applies 'scientific', 'non-entertainment' criteria to historical data while a dramatic re-construction need not do so. 85

It is also a dichotomy which reinforces the traditional institutionalisation of forms within television which has been questioned in recent years. The innovatory forms developed by television since the mid-sixties, such as the BBC's Wednesday Play series and the development of the drama-documentary form (eg Mercer's *In Two Minds*), while still marginal to the general output, went some way towards undermining the fixed and ossified as well as ideologically functional categories. Seen in this light, *Shoulder to Shoulders*'s aspiration to the status of the 'classic serials' marks a retrograde step in the history of television forms and a return to the received forms of literature and theatre which dominated television in earlier decades. As Raymond Williams suggests in *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* (Fontana, 1974) the implications of the scale and intensity of television drama as a form have scarcely begun to be considered seriously. In such a situation the problem of representation has become increasingly urgent.

In the last few years the 'emancipated woman' has become a popular subject for drama on television (eg *The Notorious Woman*, *Three Women* etc) in plays purporting to examine the place of women in patriarchal society. 'Woman', exactly like privatised working class youth in the 50's and 60's, is now put forward as the exemplary victim of our culture. But this does not help us to change the world. Quite clearly, that men should not dominate the means of production is a prerequisite if this situation is to be changed, but not a solution. This can only lie in 'a refusal to assign the film a place in the Platonic schema of models and copies, a refusal to operate a reading which would consist of "projections" and "identifications"' (Michael Cegarra 'Cinema and Semiology' *Screen* Spring/Summer 1973).

CLAIRE JOHNSTON.

The tripartite schema of bourgeois historiography – narrative history, Great Men, and moral judgment – can be demonstrated to underpin what could be called the Anglo-American tradition in film history-cum-criticism. Within this tradition various national cinemas rise and succeed each other on a chronological basis; the Great Men are the Directors conceived as virtually autonomous geniuses prised free from the economic/social/cultural milieux in which they worked; and the moral judgment is supplied by a (sometimes) virulent anti-Hollywoodism and by an impatient commitment to liberal humanism.

The basic schema is a pervasive one. It not only structures the orthodox histories like Rotha and Griffith's *The Film Till Now*, Arthur Knight's *The Liveliest Art* and Lewis Jacob's *The Rise of the American Film* but also makes its mark on popular accounts

86 of the cinema like Roger Manvell's *Film* and Penelope Houston's *The Contemporary Cinema* and theoretical works like Ernest Lindgren's *The Art of the Film* – all the books, in effect, that dominated the Cinema sections of British (and American?) libraries until the film book explosion of the late 1960's.

In the field of historiography generally this concept of history has been substantially attacked (the attack is conveniently summarised in Gareth Stedman Jones' article 'History: the Poverty of Empiricism' which appears in *Ideology in Social Science*, ed Robin Blackburn, Fontana) and other ways of writing history have been demonstrated (particularly in the work of Marxist historians like Christopher Hill, Eric Hobsbawm and Edward Thompson). It is a mark of the intellectual isolation of the dominant film culture in this country that none of this has had any effect – histories of the cinema conceived in the traditional way and seemingly quite innocent of the general debate continue to be written and approved of. Basil Wright's *The Long View* (Secker and Warburg, 1974) is the latest example of this.

The book is subtitled *A Personal Reflection on World Cinema* and Wright introduces it as being 'neither a history of the film nor a technical study . . . rather, the record of a love affair with the film medium . . .' and attempts to outline what he considers the book's limitations, eg his own inability to cope with the works of Bergman and Antonioni and his failure to see as many films as he would have liked. However, it is the *unconscious limitations* of the book which are interesting, the ideological conception of history/criticism it represents, what it regards as the natural and obvious way to write history.

Most centrally, the book is arranged chronologically into eight chapters entitled Free For All (1895-1915), Stars and Stripes (1915-1927), All Talking, All Singing, All Dancing (1927-1939), War (1939-1945), Neo-Realism, Witch Hunts and Wide Screens (1945-1960), Iron Curtain and Points East (1945-1960); New Waves, Angries and Undergrounds (1960-1970); and Whatever Next . . .? Each chapter has a prologue entitled 'Signpost' and a particular year and (usually) a film is quoted. Thus 1895 is 'The Year of the Lumière Brothers'; 1915 'The Year of Birth of a Nation'; 1927 'The Year of *The Jazz Singer*'; 1939 'The Year of *Gone With the Wind*'; 1945 'The Year of Rome – *Open City*'; 1956 'The Year of *Pather Panchali*'; 1960 The Year of *A Bout de Souffle*'; and 1970 'The Year of Woodstock and *Gimme Shelter*'. The (from a bourgeois perspective) major social, political and cultural events of each signposted year are enumerated. The point of quoting all this in such detail is to point up the fallacious belief that simple chronological succession or contemporaneousness of events invests them with relational significance, but more particularly, to exemplify the extent to which the chapter categories and the 'signpost' films reproduce the conception of what is valuable in cinema

to be found in the books I have described as constituting the Anglo-American tradition. 87

This relationship is further confirmed by the weight of emphasis on particular directors. The following receive more than two lines of entries in the index: Asquith, Bertolucci, Bresson, Buñuel, Cavalcanti, Chaplin, Clair, Clement, DeMille, De Sica, Donskoi, Dovzhenko, Dreyer, Eisenstein, Flaherty, John Ford, Gance, Godard, Grierson, Griffith, Hitchcock, Huston, Kubrick, Kurosawa, Mizoguchi, Olivier, Oshima, Ozu, Pabst, Polanski, Pudovkin, Satyajit Ray, Carol Reed, Renoir, Resnais, Truffaut, Vigo, Von Sternberg, Von Stroheim, Wilder, Wyler. This indicates a sensibility and conception of film history and criticism the parameters of which are the Film Society, the British Documentary Movement, *Sequence* and *Sight and Sound*.

The most interesting English critics and film makers have been those who have sought the Holy Grail of a union between a liberal humanist-based realism and the more 'poetic', mesmeric qualities of the cinema. This is evident in the work of many of the British Documentary movement, particularly Jennings; it is present in *Sequence* and runs through both the criticism and the films of Lindsay Anderson. It forms a strong if implicit axis both of Basil Wright's films and of *The Long View*. Sometimes the liberal humanist realism aspect is stressed – as in Wright's discussion of war movies – sometimes the poetic/mesmeric – as in the long discussion, in the opening chapter, of the relationship between film and dream and in the invocation of particular images from the films discussed.

However, in any conflict between these two tendencies the liberal humanism, with its social realist emphasis, usually wins out. Basil Wright's misreading of *Crossfire* illustrates this. Characteristically he stresses the film's 'realist' qualities and social concern with the problem of anti-semitism. In doing so he ignores crucial elements of the film's sign system like its stylised, genre quality and the connected metaphysical concern with human isolation.

Given its representative quality and the eminence of its author *The Long View* will undoubtedly take its place on the library shelves along with the standard works of the Anglo-American tradition and its newer exemplars such as David Robinson's *World Cinema: a short history* as well as recent books of memoirs-cum-history-cum-criticism like Paul Rotha's *Documentary Diary* and Harry Watt's *Don't Look at the Camera*. An ideology of film whose shortcomings ought by now to be very obvious continues to receive a regular confirmation.

COLIN MCARTHUR.

The British Film Institute's 1974 Annual General Meeting was a less coherent affair than it has been for the past four years. The

88 conflict between the Governors and¹ a substantial section of the membership, headed by the Members' Action Group, which has structured recent meetings was muted and cut across by issues raised by other groups of members.

The reasons for the different character of the 1974 AGM are fairly obvious. There have been a good number of changes in the people holding key posts in the Institute and signs that major policies are being rethought. It is too early to say whether this marks a decisive break with the policies (ill-considered expansionism, glib populism combined with anti-intellectualism) and operational inefficiency that nearly brought the Institute to disaster a few years ago. For the moment it seems reasonable to suspend judgment.

The clearest indications that these changes might amount to something positive are: the shift in regional policy from one whose perspective was an indefinite expansion of the number of theatres whose only function is to show films in a rather haphazard way to one whose perspective is the creation of film centres which will provide a range of services in key areas of the country; the reconsideration of public lecture policy with a view to relating it to Institute activities as a whole and replacing the publicity/fan quality of the John Player lectures with an intellectual and popularising concern; a changed focus for the Production Board so that an interest in and support for group film and television work is added to the previous concentration on discovering individual talent.

These indications can't yet be regarded as substantial since they exist only at the level of promises or very early initiation. To be set against them are negative indications which at present have more weight. They are:

1. The uneasy relationship that has existed between staff and management over the past few years was highlighted by the first strike of Institute staff (a two week strike over the attempted dismissal of the deputy curator of the Archive). To provoke staff, whose social composition and nature of work are hardly likely to make them militant, to strike has to be a mark of bad management. Both the immediate dispute and the general problem of staff management relationships are now the subjects of outside investigations and these investigations may presumably encourage the management to rethink its attitude to the staff. In any case the strike could prove to be an important step forward for the Institute in that it helped the staff to discover a collective identity and the strength that comes from that.

2. National Film Theatre programming has maintained its haphazard and superficial quality. Subjects for seasons are seemingly chosen at random, interesting subjects are destroyed through the lack of a proper conception and support for programmes either in

terms of lectures and discussions or in terms of written material (programme sheets, programme booklet descriptions) is either non-existent or unhelpful. The recent season of right wing films ('Right first time') symbolises the poverty of programming. The objections to this season are first of an intellectual rather than a political kind. There is undoubtedly a place for seasons that challenge the easy liberalism that is often a feature of NFT programmes (a liberalism that is conveniently represented in the same programme booklet as 'right first time' by the anti-war film season). But such a challenge will not be made by a conception that pathetically muddles together films of such diverse political tendencies as *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie*, *True Grit*, *La Guerre est Finie*, *They were Expendable*, *Praise Marx and pass the Ammunition*, *The Leopard* and *The Party and the Guests*.

3. *Sight and Sound* has the same rather dismal quality as the National Film Theatre though for different reasons. Editorial conservatism has produced a failure to develop and adapt basic principles. The wide ranging curiosity about the cinema and commitment to lively journalism that energised *Sequence* and then *Sight and Sound* in the late 1940's and early 1950's have, twenty-five years later, atrophied into a limited and predictable taste and a frozen style of writing.

Both the National Film Theatre and *Sight and Sound* play key roles in maintaining the character of the dominant film culture in Britain so that the Institute's failure to recognise this and assess how appropriate such a role is for a state institution is an important one. The failure of recognition is undoubtedly due to the characteristic assumption that the Institute like all state institutions plays a neutral role. The way it is implicated in the general film culture therefore goes largely unexamined.

ALAN LOVELL.

The role of women in films and the position of the woman director are increasingly recognised as an area of study. But to label all such work 'feminist criticism' is to miss the different methods being applied.

Articles in *Women & Film* continually emphasise the importance of the cinema in creating myths about women and their role in society. Jacoba Atlas writes that film 'unlike any other art form, shapes and emphasises our own hopes, dreams and aspirations'; she compares films to dreams 'in which we are caught in a trap of another's creation and that creation in turn can become one's own fantasy, one's own evaluation of one's self, one's own idea and even more destructively one's own self-image'. Constance Penley, in an article on *Cries and Whispers*, describes film as 'perhaps the major myth-making force of our time' and criticises

90 Bergman for using 'the same characterisations that have been seen throughout the history of film: woman as victim, temptress, evil incarnate and earth mother'. *The Green Wall* and *No Stars in the Jungle* are described as 'middle-class male Peruvian myths of what men want in women'. (These quotes are all taken from *Women & Film*, No 2/3.)

Many articles comment on specific films or directors from this point of view, accepting that the cinema creates myths but criticising the ones they use. Thus, Kinder and Houston discuss *Savage Messiah* and *Heat* and conclude that 'both films continue the myth of male superiority . . . by granting youth to the men and by suggesting that men are endowed by Nature with superior beauty or genius'. *Cries and Whispers* is described as 'the filmic paradigm of woman as Other, of woman as nothing but the projected fears and desires of men'. Jacoba Atlas sees *Children of Paradise*, *Jules and Jim* and *Alice's Restaurant* as progressive films because the women in them know that they are playing the roles of 'Beauty, Enigma, Mother'.

The cinema, from this point of view, is being used to reinforce myths created by men. The answer then is not to change the role of film but its effect. Naome Gilbert (in issue No 2), writes of the importance of an 'innovative characterisation of women with whom a female audience can feel socially identified'. The aim is to present an alternative to the image of themselves with which women are continually assailed, so the description of the culture heroine is as far from 'reality' as the women in *Cries and Whispers*; her attributes include 'courage, perseverance, endurance, principled self-discipline, an indifferent beauty, potency of mind and spirit and the indefatigable desire to struggle and win'. (It should be noted that not all writers for the magazine endorse this view; Julia Lesage (in issue No 415) is doubtful about the value of such a heroine.)

It is significant that Gilbert cites the work of Nelly Kaplan at this point, for Kaplan is very concerned with changing the image women have of themselves via films. In an interview, she has remarked that 'if you show that a prostitute has not to be punished, can punish others, can go away and be free, you show a way', and 'if you show a woman who is secure in herself, the women who watch it will have security because they will be stronger and more aware of themselves'. In addition, she uses fiction in an attempt to reach the non-converted; 'even men', she says, 'through fiction, are impressed by what I want to say'. (*Notes on Women's Cinema*, ed Claire Johnston, *Screen* pamphlet No 2.)

The attitudes expressed in *Women & Film* have considerable attraction. The articles have one aim - to attack male views of women as expressed in film and to set up a women's cinema to allow women to communicate with each other. But the articles

do rely on assumptions which pose the kind of problems that face anyone who tries to think about the relationship between art and ideology. They assume that we know how an audience will respond to an image in a film and that all audiences will react in the same way. The concepts of myth and image underpin the articles but their function is assumed to be the same and to be understood without explanation; the means by which the image is read by the audience is not explored. The role stereotypes are thought to play in films raises problems. Reading the piece on *Cries and Whispers*, one wonders whether men haven't been equally stereotyped by Bergman; and whether the study of sexist stereotyping began by *Women & Film* should not be extended to include the question of stereotyping as a general artistic method.

The emphasis on the image of women in film which dominates *Women & Film* is present to a more limited extent in work published in England, and is combined with an effort to deal with some of the longstanding issues in the art and ideology debate. In their article on women in Raoul Walsh's films, Pam Cook and Claire Johnston concentrate on Jane Russell's role in *The Revolt of Mamie Stover* and point out that

'the forms of representation generated by the classic cinema – the myths of woman as pin-up, vamp, "Mississippi Cinderella" – are the only means by which she can achieve the objective of becoming the subject rather than the object of desire.' (Raoul Walsh, ed Phil Hardy, Edinburgh Film Festival, 1974).

They speak of Mamie/Russell assuming 'the iconography of the pin-up . . . an image emptied of all personality and individuality'.

In her essay in *Notes on Women's Cinema* 'Women's Cinema as Counter-Cinema', Claire Johnston tries to fit the myth of women used in films into an overall structure. Whereas men have tended to evade stereotyping in the interests of realism, the 'dominant ideology' presents women as 'eternal and unchanging'. (p 25) She does point out that it may be possible to use stereotypes to draw attention to the ideology behind them but the main emphasis of her article is on the necessity of women's cinema being a counter-cinema and her arguments are similar to those of Peter Wollen in his article on counter-cinema in *Afterimage* No 4. She believes that the tools and techniques of cinema cannot be used neutrally to reveal reality. Thus the idea of the images of women in the cinema is locked into a general theory of the cinema of signs. The importance of fantasy then is not specifically to help women normally faced with degrading images of themselves but to offer a more general challenge to the depiction of reality by the bourgeois, male cinema and to the prevailing notion of realism.

The article on Walsh raises problems which are not specific to feminist criticism but occur in film criticism generally. The same problems arise in the article by Paul Willemsen in the same book.

92 They centre on the use of psycho-analysis as a case for critical readings of films.

Claire Johnston's essay on counter-cinema poses other difficulties. Since she defines past and current cinema as male and bourgeois, any women's cinema should be counter-cinema because it is being made by someone who is oppressed. This leads to the grouping together of women directors whose differences might be more illuminating, in particular Dorothy Arzner who directly challenges sexist ideology and Ida Lupino, who does not do so. Is the point about the ideological nature of the techniques of bourgeois cinema relevant if Hawks, Ford, Lupino and Varda all use them to present such different views of women?

CHRISTINE GERAGHTY.

Any proposals for the reform of the media which bring cries of pain from both Alasdair Burnett and Lord Shawcross can't be all bad, and there are some useful ideas in the Labour Party discussion document *The People and the Media*, even if few of them are new. The document emerges out of a series of discussions between MPs and people in the media, in unions and in academic posts, and many of its proposals have that air of 'realism' which one associates with a party manifesto. Thus, it is assumed that advertising should continue to be a major source of revenue both for newspapers and for television, and there is not even any discussion of the desirability of this. Nevertheless, what is proposed (though of course this is a long way from being official party policy, let alone government policy) is more radical than anything that has so far emerged from a major political party.

For broadcasting the key points are: the separation of the collection of revenue from decisions about programme-making, the democratisation of decision-making bodies, the opening up of their deliberations to the public, and the proliferation of programme-making units. For the press, the main proposal is that advertising revenue be redistributed to reverse the trend towards monopoly.

So far so good. The party thinkers were not seduced into such unrealistic and elitist ideas as that the fourth channel should be entirely given over to educational programmes (though they do appear to assume, along with almost everyone else, that we will and should have a fourth channel. But why? Who needs it?). Nor do they follow current fashion by going overboard for 'access' as a solution to all television's ills. (The enthusiasm for access no doubt comes from worthy political motives, but in the form in which it is proposed it usually sounds like a recipe for hours and hours of amateur, and hence very bad, television.) And, most laudable of all, there is no shrinking from the conclusion that the present duopoly of the BBC and ITV should be broken to allow greater freedom and diversity.

Yet one cannot help being a little disappointed. Firstly, and this may simply be due to lack of space, though I doubt it, there is a notable lack of detail in the discussions about democratising the media, and particularly television. The document speaks of the output of the 'programme units' being 'organised' by two television corporations. But who would actually decide what programme should be made? And on what criteria would the apportioning of revenue be made by the proposed 'Public Broadcasting Commission'? Would the people who make the programmes (and that means *all* the people, not just directors and producers) really have the power to make what they wanted and to get it shown; or would there still be, as now, a bureaucratic presence interposed between programme maker and audience? And another question: would total freedom for the programme makers be a good thing; should not the public, who will foot the bill, have some say, and not just *after* the programmes have been made, as passive consumers, switching on or off? These questions are not considered in this document because, one suspects, the first concern of its authors was to resist the domination of the media by a few powerful (and hostile) voices.

This concern is natural enough; after all, the press is very largely controlled by men who are personally hostile to Labour. But such a concern has produced what is, certainly for *Screen*, a very curious distortion. There is virtually no mention in this document of the film industry. The reason for this must surely be that the Labour Party is basically only interested in the media insofar as they are held to affect people's political ideas; and so the best kind of organisation is one which prevents small groups or individuals from dominating political discussion. Since the British film industry has never been overtly much concerned with politics, it isn't thought to be a problem in this context. But this is surely a very short-sighted view. People's political ideas are not formed mainly by newspapers and television news programmes – otherwise Labour would never be elected to government at all. Political ideas proceed out of the total ideology of a society (though of course they are directed by political activity and discussion). This ideology is conveyed not merely by the political views of newspapers, but by every kind of communication which exists in a society. And the cinema is, still, an important conveyer of ideology, not least because its ideology is usually hidden, not patent. The British cinema may not be much concerned with politics in the way that a Labour MP at Westminster is concerned; but who can doubt that all of us have had our image of the world formed in part by the cinema. And, for most of us, more by the cinema than by leaders in the *Daily Telegraph*.

If we believe that the ideology of British cinema is reactionary (and of course it has to be *proved*, not simply assumed, to be so); and if we also believe that it is in some degree effective (though

94 how and to what extent is also a problem), then we should require of a supposedly progressive political party that it do something about it, rather than simply ignoring it. But for both cinema and television, the question of what to do brings us straight back to the details of democratising the media.

It isn't going to be enough simply to ensure that the people making decisions about which programmes to make and how are independent of crude commercial considerations and are not in a position to impose their own political beliefs. Real democratisation would entail the genuine involvement of all those who produce and those for whom they produce in the decision-making process; ie giving power to the workers. This is a very different thing from merely protecting a centralised bureaucracy from direct commercial and political pressures, in the interests of 'freedom of speech'. It may be that the failure of the Labour Party document to spell this out clearly is not just another piece of political 'realism'; but if it isn't then it is a pity that there is not more detail on this point, for it would certainly have increased the interest of the publication.

EDWARD BUSCOMBE.

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